■ METRO/A18
14 kids in Tondo hospitalized for eating 'tuba-tuba' fruit

■ ACROSS/A16
Cops in Quezon province admit jueteng back via guerilla type operations

■ WORLD/A10
California executes sick death row inmate, oldest at 76

■ 2bU!/C1
10 years after 'Bridget Jones', there's no stopping chick lit; now there's the Chinovela

Parrot blamed for breakup: It squawked on secret lover

LONDON—A TALKATIVE parrot is being blamed for the breakup of a couple's relationship after squawking the name of the woman's secret lover.

Ziggy, an 8-year-old African grey, prompted a confession from

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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BI throws out alien rap vs ABS-CBN's news head

By Leila B. Salaverria and Marinel R. Cruz

A TELEVISION/RADIO PRESENTER/ASSOCIATE with ABS-CBN yesterday sought the deportation of the network's News and Current Affairs head Maria Ressa on the grounds that she was a foreigner without a proper permit to work in the country.

But the bureau of immigration tossed out

TUESDAYS A6

It's official: US says no

Embassy rejects RP request to take custody of 4 GIs in rape

GO AWAY. The mood at the US Embassy toward the media after it finally and formally made its position known after 2 months of silence.

By Veit Cuaresma and Armand N. Nocum
in Manila
and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

THE US EMBASSY HAS refused to relinquish custody of the four American Marines accused of rape, but the judge in charge of the case said this would actually quicken the pace of the trial.

"That's their right," Judge Benjamin Dilagyel Olongapo Regional Trial Court Branch 75 said yesterday in reaction to the embassy's refusal to turn over Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpenter and Lance Corporals Daniel Smith, Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis. All were charged with raping a Filipino woman on Nov. 1 at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales.

"Rewording requisite. (This could speed up the case)," Dilag said, adding that the accused could now be considered to have surrendered to the proper authorities.

He said that after this had been made clear to the defense lawyers, he would schedule the arraignment of the accused.

But first, he said, he had to resolve the motions filed by a defense lawyer and the public prosecutors.

The US Embassy had been stonewalling on the Philippine government's diplomatic note of Nov. 16 seeking custody of the four Marines.

When the embassy finally replied on Monday, it invoked the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, which allows the US government

(IT'S OFFICIAL) A6

House adopting ConCom proposals

By Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

IT APPEARS TO HAVE ALL THE hallmarks of a sweeping constitutional amendment process.

The Charter change show resurfaced in earnest in the House of Representatives yesterday, featuring a script that seems to hew essentially to the one provided by President Macapagal-Arroyo's handpicked Consultative Commission. It allows her to complete her term until 2010 and to scrap the 2007 elections.

Even the Senate will have its own show today. But Sen. Joker Arroyo admits it is just that—"putting on a big 'yan (all for show)." Illness overwhelming resistance in the Senate against amending the Constitution.

Still, the Senate committee on constitutional amendments will open a hearing on proposed modes of introducing Charter change—by transforming the two chambers of Congress into a constituent assembly or calling a constitutional convention.

"I don't feel any pressure to do anything," said Sen. Richard Gordon, committee chair, referring to the Malacañang timeline to have

SOUND! A6

BOUNTY. A hooded Filipino who informed on an Abu Sayyaf leader gets a P5-million reward from US official Wilson Lee in Zamboanga yesterday.

A FILIPINO soldier welcomes 1st US Special Forces members at the start of joint military exercises yesterday. (See story on Page A2.)

Payback time: Fil-Am doctors return home

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHILE HUNDREDS OF DOCtors are leaving the Philippines as nurses, a group of Filipino-American physicians is returning to give something back to their former countrymen.

Physicians for Peace (PFP), a United States-based non-profit organization, is running medical missions in the country.

Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, chair of the PFP's Philippine chapter, called the medical missions "return migration."

"What we intend to do is to become a vehicle for return migration. We also want it to be an avenue for foreign doctors to come here and see how beautiful the Philippines is," Herbosa said.

He was seconded by Dr. Jaun Montero, a Filipino-born US citizen who has been coming back regularly to the Philippines the last few years

PAYBACK A6

RP nurses to infuse young blood into Hawaii health care system

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

VIGAN CITY—THE INFLUX OF Ilocano nurses in Hawaii, propelled by the agreement signed last week by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle, is expected to inject young blood into the state's nursing system.

Nurses in Hawaii are graying, with their average age rising to 48.7 years in 2000 from 45 in 1987.

Hawaii officials said they receive some 400 nurses a year, but only 300 students graduate from the state's nursing schools.

As it is, Hawaii is among the states with the lowest number of registered nurses per capita in the United States. The annual nursing shortage in Hawaii is estimated to reach more than 4,500 by 2020.

To help address the shortage, Singson and Lingle signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the University of Northern Philippines (UNP) and the University of Hawaii's Kapiolani Community College (KCC).

RP NURSES A8

Terminate VFA, Miriam urges Congress

By Philip Tubeza

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO YESterday called for the termination of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

Santiago, chair of the Senate foreign relations committee and outlier of the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA (Lovfa), said the US Embassy's refusal to turn over the four Americans charged with rape to Philippine authorities left Congress with "no choice" but to terminate the VFA and renegotiate a new treaty.

But Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Sen. Joker Arroyo took a diplomatic tack, saying the Department of Foreign Affairs should press the US Embassy to change its position or arrive at "a favorable and just compromise" with the US government.

Arroyo said the VFA should eventually be revised to correct provisions disadvantageous to the Philippines.

Santiago said: "We cannot let our people down. The expectations [were] very high that the US [would] surrender the accused[]. We are equal states. And this is not the way to treat a co-equal or even a valued ally."

She said the Lovfa would meet on Friday to formulate the resolution calling for a renegotiation, which could be approved by the Senate and the House as early as next week.

The resolutions will then be submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo for her to decide whether to implement it, Santiago said.

If the President approves it, the country will have to wait for six months before the VFA "automatically terminates," she said, adding:

"This will all come depend on whether Presi-

TERMINATE A6

Inquirer goes to 63rd Golden Globe Awards

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—AS "BROKEBACK Mountain," a gay-themed cowboy drama, rode away with the top awards at the 63rd Golden Globe Awards held Monday evening (Tuesday morning, Manila time), the Inquirer was right there as the correspondent is the first Filipino voting member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

The Inquirer had a spot on the red carpet between Daily Variety and the Hollywood Reporter, tinseltown's bibles.

Taiwanese Ang Lee directed the movie, an adaptation of a short story by American novelist E. Annie Proulx. It won four statuettes: Best Film (Drama), Best Director (Lee), Best Screenplay

INQUIRER A8

PORTRAIT OF CONTENTMENT. Not to "desperate" Felicity Huffman

IN LOVE with "Brokeback Mountain," the Hollywood foreign press gives its Golden Globe Best Picture award to the cowboy romance.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

'Brat pack' moves into Malacañang

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DEFENSOR

THE USUALLY SNOOZY OFfice of the Presidente has become hip with the arrival of Secretary Michael Defensor at Malacañang.

On his first day as Presidential Chief of Staff, Defensor brought along a PlayStation Portable (PSP), the current rage among young video game enthusiasts, and substituted a television interview with two of the participants in the recently concluded Pinoy Big Brother television reality show.

The youngest Cabinet secretary broke into a sheepish grin when reporters pointed out the PSP tucked in flat black briefcase while he was going over unobtrusive files he had received at yesterday morning's Cabinet meeting.

Defensor, in a grey pinstriped suit accentuated by a pink tie, said he used the sleek handheld game console to take a break from the drudgery of his office, like the paperwork and long-winded meetings.

At most, Defensor met with Pinoy Big Brother housemate celebrities Bea Alonzo and Chi Minda who were doing a segment for a comedy news show.

Red-faced Mike

The former environment secretary was not fazed at the end of the interview when Alonzo and Alonzo teased him into a housemate catchcry.

"I was surprised by the gangsiyag," said Defensor, who would not tell which was Alonzo or Minda. "I just know they're from Pinoy Big Brother and they're both pretty."

Defensor described his current status as a "floating secretary" since he had not been formally sworn in and an officer in charge had already taken over his post at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Succeeding Bobi

Defensor takes over from Magdalena Yiglao who once appointed ambassador to Greece.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita is reportedly next to move as executive order shifting an expanded role in Defensor's new job.

On talk that a "brat pack" was taking over at Malacañang, Defensor said he was not sure what the rumor meant exactly.

"If they're talking about the Brat Pack of Hollywood which includes Demi Moore, I'm sure I don't want to be having [hairs]," he said.

Actually, the Brat Pack was composed of the likes of Rob Lowe, Ally Sheedy, Emilio Estevez and Demi Moore, and was a couple of generations younger than the Rat Pack which was made up of Sinatra, Davis, Dean Martin and Shirley Maclaine, among other American celebrities.

Despite Cory snub, Council of State is on

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS PUSHING AHEAD WITH plans to convene the Council of State on Jan. 24, despite a snub from former President Cory Aquino and other key opposition figures.

The high-level meeting was proposed by former President Fidel Ramos and is envisioned as being together his former, the two former Presidents and other top political leaders amid a crisis of legitimacy besetting the leadership.

But Aquino, who has broken with Ms Arroyo and demanded she step down amid allegations of election cheating, has said she would not attend because Ms Arroyo's presidency is "illegitimate" and has "collapsed."

Opposition leaders in both houses of Congress have also refused to attend.

Cebu archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal also said he was not attending the meeting because he does not want to be identified with "just one side" after the opposition and Mrs. Aquino decided not to attend the meeting, according to the Cebu archdiocesan media Veritas editor Msgr. Achilles Estrera.

"The meeting will push through because no one or no group can dictate on an official function such as this and that's why we are proposing that it will," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in a GMA-7 radio interview.

If those like Aquino did not wish to attend, that was their right, he said.

Ermita said Aquino and other opposition leaders should not take personally their political differences with the President.

Rising above politics

"In our brand of politics, when we are on opposite sides, it doesn't mean that we have to take this fight personally," he said.

Incoming Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor appealed to the opposition to rise above personal politics and deal with political issues in a constructive like manner.

"They are former Presidents and they can bring out their positions here (Council of State)...We should rise above personalities and achieve a high level of statesmanship," he said.

He said the views expressed by Aquino and other opposition leaders were "personal" and that the Council of State would have been a perfect venue for them to state their positions.

Defensor said there would be no specific agenda in the meeting. It would not aim at reaching a consensus as participants could say anything they want on any issue affecting the country.

Missed opportunity

Aquino just missed out on a chance to tell President Arroyo: "Ma'am Irlande se step down from her post, he said.

He said the absence of opposition leaders would not be significant as former and the leaders of various institutions would be attending.

"It doesn't mean that the Council of State would be ineffective or that it should no longer be convened," Defensor told reporters.

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said it was "sad" that Aquino was not attending but said the meeting would still be important as there were still important issues to be discussed, especially with respect to the economy.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the meeting was "not about personalities, but about the collective effort of national leaders committed to national reconciliation and renewal."

"President Arroyo welcomes those who still come, and respects the decision of those who have chosen not to," Bunye said. AP, C. Calma, computer Jr. and Christine Avendaño

Protest greets US troops in South

ABOUT 300 AMERICAN AND FILIPINO SOLdiers began their annual war games in Mindanao on Tuesday part of counterterrorism training that has helped Philippine troops hone their skills in the fight against al-Qaida-linked militants.

Military officials said about 40 American and 200 Filipino soldiers are taking part in small unit tactics, rifle marksmanship, combat lifesaver training and field training exercises within the army's Camp Lumbo in Carmen town, North Cotabato.

Outside the camp, anti-riot police backed by soldiers and a fire truck blocked a 15-vehicle convoy of about 5,000 protesters demanding that US troops leave Muslim areas in Mindanao.

"We don't want US troops on Muslim soil," said Datu Michael Mastura, one protest organizers.

"These combined exercises were designed to enhance skills and capabilities of Filipino soldiers," Col. Eugenio Pabustan, a brigade commander, told a news conference. AP, Marvin

Prosecutors ask court to resolve Erap plunder case

By Nelson S. Flores

STATE PROSECUTORS YESTERDAY ASKED the Sandiganbayan Special Division to end the plunder trial of deposed President Estrada and consider the case submitted for resolution.

The move came a day after Estrada's lawyers failed to present any defense witness.

In a 28-page motion, the prosecution said that even if the trial were to be terminated now, Estrada and his lawyers could no longer validly claim denial of due process as they had been given almost three years to prepare and present their case since the last prosecution witness was presented in April 2003.

The motion also pointed out the defense lawyers were simply letting the proceedings drag on. They said the defense had been given enough opportunity to present its side.

"Due process has been very well kept and preserved," they said.

Today's lawyer Estrada Siguiong recently informed the court that the defense had only two witnesses more to present, including Estrada.

Last 2 witnesses

But in an "urgent manifestation" last dec. 11, Siguiong said the defense may still call several other witnesses after the court had earlier announced, mostly to testify on the alleged selective prosecution and illegal nature of Estrada.

But the prosecution asked the sandiganbayan to direct the defense to the last two witnesses that Siguiong had mentioned in person.

It argued that the defense "failure" Estrada's legally illegal manifestation that all necessary were no longer tenable. It said the subpoenas issued in the people who would supposedly testify on those issues should now be quashed.

The prosecution noted that aside from the Supreme Court rulings in *Estrada vs Sandiganbayan* and *Estrada vs Desierto* upholding the court's accusation in January 2001, the two chambers of Congress also passed separate resolutions recognizing the legitimacy of the former government.

Legal opinion

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AFP beefs up security in wake of rebel attacks

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES vowed yesterday to step up security around government installations and other potential targets after a spate of deadly communist rebel attacks.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga met his top commanders to assess the security threat posed by the 37-year-old New People's Army rebel movement, which have killed at least four soldiers in recent days.

He told reporters after the meeting that military units must improve their intelligence to stave attacks on soft targets such as "poorly-defended police stations" and soldiers "travelling alone or in groups of two."

He said the military is "100 percent behind" the military to continue security precautions at government and military buildings because they were "causing terror for the people and disrupting their livelihoods."

NPA rebels killed four soldiers and wounded eight others in an ambush in Samar last Sunday. They also attacked a jail in Batangas City on Saturday and freed nine NPA members and four other inmates.

Biggest threat

Senga described the NPA as one of the biggest security threats in the country although the Moslem separatist group Abu Sayyaf posed more danger in the south. He added that even "a small terrorist attack in a tourist resort" would have a significant impact on the country's economy and further destabilize peace and security.

"We have been successful in preventing terror attacks but it doesn't mean there will be no more attacks. That is why our thrust is for intensified intelligence collection efforts in cooperation with Philippine National Police and other government agencies," Senga said.

Another reason for the military to do better work at intelligence gathering were the recent incursions of a fugitive Marine captain into military and police camps.

Military intelligence units have failed to locate Capt. Nicanor Bartolom, one of the alleged leaders of Oakwood mutiny, who escaped from military custody last Dec. 16.

'Anything's possible'

In recent weeks, Bartolom has shown video clips and still pictures of himself inside the AFP Western Command and Southern Command headquarters in Palawan and Zamboanga City, respectively, and most recently, in the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame. AFP with a report from Donna Z. Pazzibugan

Solons want PNCC permit voided

EIGHT CONGRESSMEN FILED A RESOLUTION in the House yesterday urging the revocation of the Philippine National Construction Company's permit to operate the North and South Luzon expressways due to "unsatisfactory performances and noncompliance" with the terms of its franchise.

In House Resolution No. 2055, the lawmakers said the PNCC had failed to pay the annual concession fee of P1 billion and now owed P2 billion to the Toll Regulatory Board.

The resolution was signed by Representatives Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado, Antonio T. Tinio, Generoso Tulagan, Mark O. Cojuangco and Gonzalo G. Tinio, all of Pangasinan; Herminiando I. Mercado of Tarlac; Wilfredo Mabilangan of Aurora and Rodolfo T. Albano III of Isabela.

The eight said the PNCC had also failed to comply with the agreement to extend the North Luzon Expressway to Carmen, Pangasinan, from Sta. Ines, Pampanga, and the South Luzon Expressway to Lucena Jct. from Calamba, Laguna.

To cap it all, they said, the PNCC ordered its joint venture partners to deal with other firms through a supplemental Toll Operation Agreement, which in effect permitted for the extension of the PNCC franchise beyond its expiration date of April 30, 2007.

They said the extension "is considered a usurpation of the legislative power to grant franchises," and "officials who refuse to heed this are guilty and criminally liable for the damages caused."

The legislators said the agreements, if not properly addressed, would result "in a monopoly of Congress and the executive branch of the government."

They also urged the removal from the franchise agreement of the PNCC's right to rehabilitate the old shanghai Tarlac-Calamba portion of the South Luzon Expressway due to the company's continued failure to repair the segment within the agreed upon period. Michael Lim Ubac

Pimentel asks PAL to rethink decision to stop flying to Riyadh

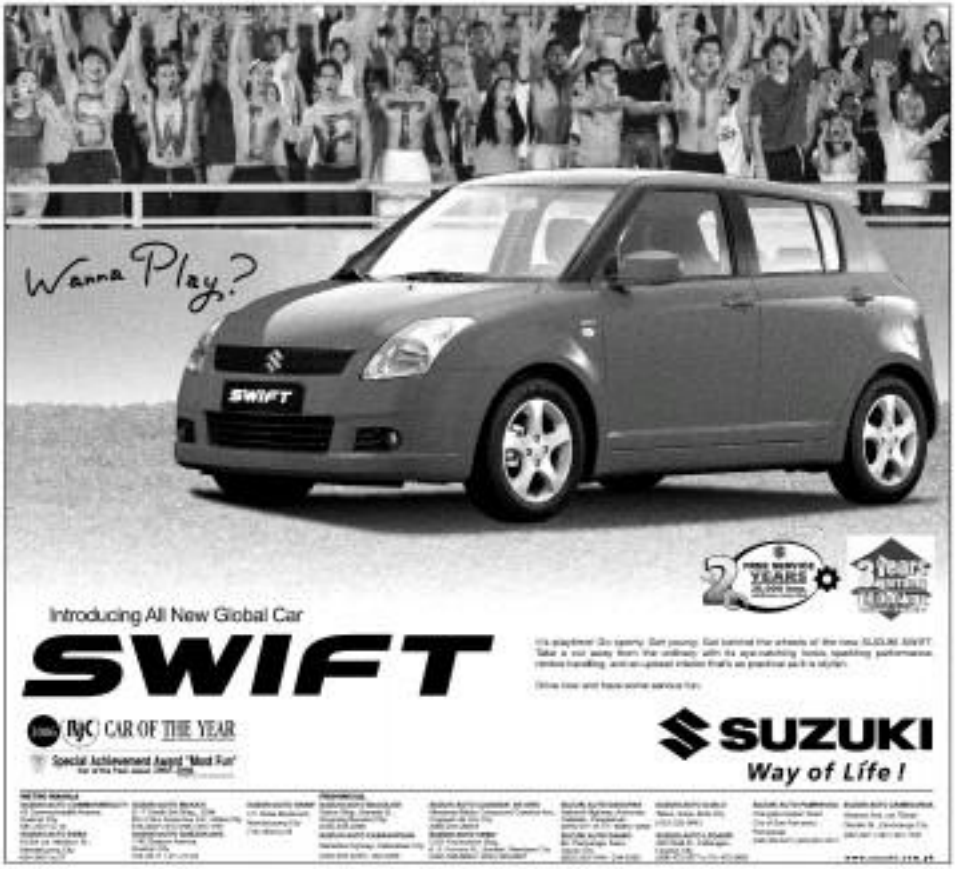
SENATOR [illegible] "SEC. LITO Arroyo to overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia, Senator Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday asked the Philippine Airlines to reconsider its decision to discontinue flights to the oil-rich kingdom starting March 2.

Pimentel said PAL's decision to stop its Manila-Riyadh flights was difficult to understand since around one million OFWs were employed in Saudi Arabia and "make up a captive market" for the airline.

PAL president Jaime Bautista announced last week that the three times a week flights to Riyadh have not been profitable for the past several years due to stiff competition from at least six airlines from various Arab Gulf states.

"We were trying to maintain Riyadh to give our OFWs the means but since the Middle Eastern carriers have been serving the route well, then we can suspend operations," Bautista said.

The Middle Eastern national carriers already operate a total of 63 flights weekly between Manila, Cebu and nine points in the region. In addition, five East Asian carriers serve the Gulf market from the Philippines with 32 flights weekly via their hubs.



Ex-agri chief takes over Aussie mining firm

By Christine A. Gaylican

A GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN led by former Agriculture Secretary Cesar E. Domingues is taking over management of an Australian company's mining operations in Albay which the government had controversially suspended after two mining spills last year, and is promising to install better systems and controls to ensure environmental safety.

Announcements issued here and in Sydney yesterday said that Domingues and other undisclosed investors had bought into the Australian company Lafayette Mining Limited Australia and would manage the operations of Lafayette Philippines. Domingues will head the local firm as chairman, president and chief executive officer, the announcements said.

The announcement came one week after the Pollution Adjudication Board ruled that Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc., owned by Lafayette, had violated the Clean Water Act when it discharged waste water with a high cyanide content into creeks in Albay's Rapu-Rapu island last October. It fined the company P13.4 million.

"We will not resume operations of the Rapu-Rapu polymetallic processing plant unless we are absolutely sure that the project is operated in a responsible and environmentally sustainable manner," Domingues said. "Mining is a partnership for the benefit of all parties, the surrounding communities, the government and the economy and the company itself."

Domingues said his priorities were to find the source of the spills and introduce measures to prevent their occurrence and ensure full compliance with environmental laws.

He said he planned to install an on-line monitoring system to allow interested parties to check on the plant's operations any time of the day through the Internet.

Lafayette's mineral production area in Rapu-Rapu will soon get its lease term of production renewed after the relinquishment of its mining lease to Domingues' group.

The new mine operators will also be required to set up a multipartite monitoring team composed of representatives from the community, the Church, and other sectors to check the project's compliance with environmental laws.

Lafayette's announcement in Sydney said Domingues's group was to acquire 19 million shares, equivalent to a 14 percent stake, in Lafayette Mining Limited Australia for $1 million (roughly P59.62 million).

As part of the arrangement, Domingues would join the four-member board of the parent company and manage its Philippine operations "from afar."

Domingues was secretary of agriculture and natural resources during the Aquino administration. He is the father of the Boracay Ungod projects and led the campaign against the destructive "boats and" fishing method.

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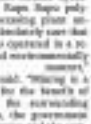

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Jocjoc asks SC to void Senate arrest warrant

By Armando N. Nocum

FORMER AGRICULTURE UNDERSECRETARY Jocjoc "Jocjoc" Bolante yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the Senate from implementing the arrest warrant issued against him for ignoring to summon for him to attend committee hearings on the alleged anomalies in the release of the multi-million-peso fertilizer fund.

In a 20-page petition which he submitted through the Philippine Consul in Chicago, Bolante claimed that his constitutional rights have been violated and that the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee had acted in "excess" of discretion.

Bolante said he was willing to attend the panel hearings scheduled on Jan. 23 to 26, 31, 1 and 2, next year.

"If he himself is clear, the Committee clearly and expressly states that only judges may issue warrants of arrest and the Senate or any of its committees has no power, implied or otherwise, to issue the same," said Bolante, who arrived the arrest warrant on Dec. 15, 2005.

"Any exercise or threatened exercise of the purported power of the Senate to issue orders or arrest pursuant to section 21, article VI of the Constitution is unconstitutional and invalid," he added.

Bolante stressed that Section 21, Article VI of the Constitution states : "The Senate or the House of representatives or any of its respective committees may conduct inquiries in aid of legislation in accordance with its duly published rules of procedure. The rights of persons appearing in or affected by such inquiries shall be respected."

Named respondents in the petition are chief of Senate of the Senate Committee on Accountability of Public Officers and Investigations, and the Committee on Agriculture and Food; and as well as Maj. Jose Balaquilo, Senate sergeant-at-arms.

The petition docketed as G.R. No. 171,2005 by the Supreme Court was raffled to another branch of the Senate panels where Bolante was cited in contempt and was ordered arrested for failing to attend four hearings of the committees last year.

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It's official: US says no

From page A1

to keep custody of its soldiers for the duration of their trial.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, which had been negotiating with US diplomats on the custody issue, declined to comment on the reply yesterday. The 2001 deal is would enable advice from the Department of Justice on its next move.

"In the reply note verbale (No. 0060) of Jan. 16, the US Embassy stated that it is unable to accede to the request of the panel of the government of the Philippine regarding custody, the US government shall continue to exercise custody until completion of all judicial proceedings, as provided in Article 5, Section 6, of the VFA," the DFA said in a statement.

'Extraordinary case'

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo had earlier said the Philippines would be asking for "unusual physical custody" of the accused because there were no "extraordinary care" when in the Philippine government would take hold of them as provided for in the VFA.

But the DFND insists that it is extraordinary cases that the US government "shall take into full account" such a Philippine position, and appropriately inquire no other specific action from the Americans.

It is another document—the 1999 Senate Resolution No. 18—which spells out in clearer terms in favor of particular importance with regard to "extraordinary cases."

The resolution maintains that the Philippines has "the right to reject a US request for waiver of the Philippine primary jurisdiction in favor of particular importance [in the host state]," such as heinous crimes and violations of the Dangerous Drugs Act and of the Anti-Child Abuse law.

Romulo was still in Washington yesterday for engagements that, the DFA had insisted, were not related to the Subic rape case.

Not a setback

According to Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, the matter is now in Gingoog's court.

"We'll see what's the reaction of the judge," Zuño said in a phone interview.

In a Jan. 16 memo (based in Dipolog)—which the judge said he received yesterday—Zuño said the seven women was "not served" for "the reasons stated on the return

From page A1

Arroyo also said the President might not be up to standing up to the Americans.

Summon them

"The Philippine position will depend on the will of the government to assert its position, and I have doubts whether it will. You know, President Arroyo is so weak that she'll be under pressure from the Americans not to press this too much," he said.

Pangilinan said foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo should summon US Embassy officials and impress on them that the Philippines should have custody.

"To resist any sentence of arrest validly issued by a Philippine court is to effectively disregard the ...court's jurisdiction over the accused, the same jurisdiction which the US government based itself to recognize and abide by..." he said, adding:

"To disregard the reasons of arrest is a sign of disrespect for Philippine laws, which clearly by

From page A1

verbale" from the US Embassy.

The US Embassy took custody of the accused soldiers—six in all, but two were later cleared—shortly after the alleged rape. It invoked Article 5 of the VFA, which allows US authorities to hold the accused until the end of the judicial proceedings.

The Philippines' request for custody cited the same Article 5, which also provides that "confinement or detention by Philippine authorities of US military personnel shall be carried out in facilities agreed on by appropriate Philippine and [US] authorities."

The US Embassy responded to the Nov. 15 request for custody three days after Olaga issued an arrest warrant for the four accused, or on Jan. 13.

Ilan Gingoog Prosecutor Pro. Jovito Jolandoni appointed assisted by the embassy's

Jolandoni interviewed yesterday in the DOJ office in Manila. Jolandoni said that as far as they were concerned, "the development is not a setback for the prosecutors."

Jolandoni said his office would focus on speeding up the investigation. The Manila court on the petition for review filed by the Philippine lawyers of Cabgameta, Silk

From page A1

sound and Daplaan was resolved.

He also said if what is the interest of the defense lawyers to have the case resolved as soon as possible.

Olaga said the case could drag if the DOJ gave due course to the petition for review. A review takes 60 days.

Taking offense

Jolandoni said he had learned that US Embassy officials "felt offended" that an arrest warrant was issued after ongoing diplomatic negotiations on the custody issue.

But Corporal Smith's lawyer, Benjamin Formoso, as well as other defense lawyers Francisco Rodrigo and John Grimes, said they were not aware of the arrest warrant.

Formoso had filed a motion to reconsider a judicial determination of probable cause in the charges.

Jolandoni, for his part, is studying a reconsideration of the dropping of the charges against the FilipinoCrime of the accused, Timoteo Jacinto Jr.

The accused are "restricted" to a one-story, air-conditioned building with bedrooms, kitchens, and dining and living areas at the lands of the US Embassy compound being Manila Bay according to Undersecretary Zenaida Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA.

In a text message from Zamboanga City, the mother of the 20-year-old complainant said the family was conditioned to leave but the US Embassy had refused to relinquish custody of the four Marines.

"We hope the government will take serious action to serve the warrant of arrest," the mother said. "We are continuously hoping that this case will be resolved and won by the Filipino people."

Mission accomplished

LIBERTAD FROM THE CELL: Aurora Loguen (C,A) led by Rowena Legarda will stop providing legal services to the complainant because their work is done.

Acting Social Welfare Secretary Cynthia Rabe made the announcement yesterday after talking to members of the CIL, a nonstock, nonprofit group chaired by Legarda.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development had earlier entered into an agreement with the CIL to provide legal assistance to abused children.

Shortly after learning of the Subic case last year, Legarda offered her services to the complainant for free. The DSWD earlier had signed a memorandum with Legarda after the complainant's parents sought help in filing the case.

Rabe said the decision that the agreement with Legarda and the CIL was "only until the filing of the charges" against the US Marines.

"It was very important that the case be filed. Attorney Legarda has completed what she agreed to do," Rabe said.

Promise fulfilled

According to Rabe, the complainant and her family were "upset" by the development but may now decide whether they would look for other lawyers or continue Legarda's assistance in the case.

Legarda's colleague, Ilmes Ambrosio, said her services and that of the other lawyers was limited to the preliminary investigation stage.

"We have fulfilled our promise to her in that a charge was filed against the servicemen," Ambrosio said when reached on her mobile phone yesterday. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Terminate VFA, Miriam urges Congress

From page A1

dent Arroyo will respect the sense of the Philippine Congress."

Too early

But Senator Arroyo said: "I think we should first explore the possibility of the two senators agreeing. It's too early [to terminate the VFA]. This is diplomacy and diplomacy means that we first talk.

"Bryan U got on this way. It is to the United States' interests that they adhere on this..."

Summon them

"The Philippine position will depend on the will of the government to assert its position, and I have doubts whether it will. You know, President Arroyo is so weak that she'll be under pressure from the Americans not to press this too much," he said.

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Thorough review

He said there was "sufficient legal basis" under the VFA, the Philippine Bill of Rights and Rule 113 of the Rules of Court to "preserve and uphold the rights of the accused."

Senator President Franklin Drilon said Makasiar ang said the DFA should move for a thorough review of the VFA to restore its lopsided provisions.

"I don't think the position of the US Embassy is justified," Drilon said.

"The US Embassy has nothing to do with our treaty with the official business of the US government, and therefore justice and equity would call for the transfer of the

No ambassador

Arroyo said it was "painful to see" that the Americans had "no faith" in the Philippine justice system.

He assailed the US government for not appointing an ambassador to the Philippines for the last nine months.

"You see here Ambassador Schlaudeman. For nine months, we do not even have an ambassador here. That's how they look at us," he said.

House adopting ConCom proposals

From page A1

the parliamentary system in place by June.

But in the lower chamber, it was all business.

Meeting swiftly, the House committee on constitutional amendments adopted by score of 20-10 a working draft of proposed changes to the Charter to shift the country from the presidential to the parliamentary system.

President GMA aka PM

The 36-page draft contains scores of "amendments" that substantially overhaul the 1987 Constitution promulgated under the administration of Corazon Aquino.

The seven proposed changes include adopting the parliamentary system, an option for the wrapping of the scheduled elections next year and extending the terms of elective officials to 2010, establishment of a unicameral legislature and the abolition of the Senate, and lifting restrictions on foreign investments.

Draft an updated version

The draft also contains a proposal for the 50-year-old 60 hours to remain in office until her current term ends in 2010, serving both as President and prime minister.

The committee's vote was basically taken from the ConCom's draft Constitution sent to Congress last December and approved during Saturday's caucus of the ruling House Christian Muslim Mindanao Democrats. But because the ConCom report was not grouped/Committee to Congress, administrators often said the ConCom draft would serve simply as a reference.

Mr. Arroyo created the ConCom in August in the midst of impeachment proceedings against her in the House. In September, her allies lauded the impeachment complaint that contained items dubious in the Philippine Constitution arrange suggesting she rigged the presidential election.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula of Cagayan de Oro, committee chair, said the draft was an updated version of the proposed amendments adopted by the panel last December.

Presidential Spox Ignacio Bunda said the committee's report to the House committee on rules last December would likely be pulled out to be properly updated with the provisions in the working draft adopted yesterday.

Mysterious redrafting

"That's an old draft. You have to understand that we've been discussing this already for two years," said Bunda. "That draft still does not contain the provision that are in the party. Lakas, came up with. (Those) have to be incorporated in the working draft."

Article 15, containing the transitory provisions in the working draft, proposes that incumbent lawmakers be automatic members of the interim parliament until June 30, 2007.

"However, it is the ultimate for the ratification of the foregoing proposed amendments, the people shall decide to set the first election under the parliamentary system to the second Monday of May 2008, then the Interim Parliament shall be extended to June 30, 2008," reads Section 2 of the transitory provision.

"The mysterious redrafting of the proposed constitutional amendments from only 14 pages in December to 36 pages in January is very suspicious, especially hasn't intervening in the autonomy duty of the House," said Partidopan Rep. Rodolfo Gulane.

Gulane and other opposition members would not buy the explanation that the changes made to the committee's draft were the result of mere "styling" as Jaraula said.

Gulane said the old draft did not have the no-election scenario, which had been rejected. "Now, it has No. 11 as exception," Gulane said.

ConCom draft only reference

The ConCom's proposed draft was officially junked after Cebu and Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. pointed out that it had not been properly referred to the House.

Locsin said the only way it could be tackled would be when individual congressmen jumped specific amendments from the output of the 11 consultee commissions.

Locsin moved that the ConCom proposal be removed from the deliberations of proposed provisions in the committee's consideration.

Jaraula obliged and ruled that the ConCom proposal be made a mere reference for congressmen. There were no objections.

Also fueling fears of the opposition's efforts to railroad the charter change efforts are the slow deliberations on the P1.05-trillion budget for 2006 in the House.

Budget delay

Noting that the committee was moving too slowly, House leaders yesterday raised the possibility that some congressmen were delaying by passage in the hopes of removing and using portions of the 2005 budget in buy support for Charter change.

"We cannot help but come to that conclusion," Senate President Franklin Drilon said, denying that a truncated budget would give the President leeway "to realign" items of last year's budget.

"I think they're delaying this budget so that those projects would be distributed to push the proposed shift to parliamentary government," said Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., chair of the committee on finance.

"The coincidence between the push for amendments to the Constitution and the delay in the passage of the budget is too hard to ignore," he added.

The senators appeared riled by reports that the House committee on appropriations did not set any hearings on the budget yesterday this week even as the Senate committee of the whole resumed its budget hearings yesterday.

Siamese twins

"How do you get the votes [for Cha-Cha] in the House? You it [budget] as leverage" administration Senator Arroyo said in a briefing. "The Cha-cha and the budget, they are Siamese twins."

Drilon explained that should the 2005 budget be reenacted, the President has the discretion to realign some items in it, "especially in the capital expenses, where the project has already been terminated."

In effect, funds would be reallocated for projects that had been completed last year, Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago (People's Action Party) said.

"Projects that are programmed for 2006 cannot be implemented yet, but the available funds can be used for pork barrel projects. In other words, they can use the money to buy the support of members of Congress who want to be bought," he said.

The senators lamented that as things stood, the P13-billion increase in the pay of 1.4 million government employees' incorporated in the 2006 budget was already delayed.

Drilon said he wasn't "very optimistic" that the General Appropriations Act would be passed by March 21 in view of the House decision to forego hearings this week. *With reports from Philip C. Tubeo, Christine O. Avendaño and Aurora Sapallozo, PDI Reporters Bureau*

Enter new generation of women leaders

PARIS—THAT A NEW GENERATION of women are claiming power on all continents is now evident with the sweeping in of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of Liberia and the weekend victory of Michelle Bachelet in Chile.

Elected women leaders—including such iron-fisted prime ministers as India's Indira Gandhi and Britain's formidable Margaret Thatcher—have played important roles on the world stage for more than a quarter century.

In Europe and Asia, the Americas and Australia, women of the Left and Right have held office as heads of states and governments, but many, not content to operate in political arenas overwhelmingly dominated by men.

The simultaneous arrival of Bachelet, 54, in Chile's first women-to-women and Sirleaf, 67, as Africa's first ever elected women president of state suggests that a new trend may be at work.

In Europe, the last few months saw Angela Merkel emerge as Germany's first woman chancellor, while Finland's Tarja Halonen looked set for reelection as president following a strong first-round performance in the weekend.

Women presidents already hold office in Ireland and Latvia, while a woman, Jegadeesa Bayal, has emerged as the clear frontrunner to be the opposition candidate Sri Lanka's presidential election.

In Asia, several strong women leaders have emerged in the past five years—President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines, Begum Khaleda Zia, three-time prime minister of Muslim majority Bangladesh for a second time in 2001, and Prime Minister Helen Clark, who has governed New Zealand since 1999.

Even Africa, where women have long excluded from political life, currently has two female prime ministers: Maria da Carmo Silveira of Sao Tome e Principe and Luisa Diogo of Mozambique.

In the United States, the prospect of a woman succeeding US President George W. Bush is no longer taboo, with both Democrats Sen. Hillary Clinton and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice seen as strong presidential contenders.

Of Her: Lady Lisa's Back...who lets high-level intelligence to Liberia for Sirleaf's inauguration on Monday...had said she expected to see a woman president of the United States within her lifetime.

"I think it will happen because," Bush told CNN television on Friday, immediately overturning Her when asked to support issues.

Her—whose election as a black woman would be a double first for the country—has been repeatedly named in Republican circles as a possible candidate, although the issues she has on White House ambitions.

Beacon of hope

Laura Bush, who was to continue to Ghana and Niger in on a tour focused on the work of African women, hailed Sirleaf, a Harvard-educated former World Bank official, as a beacon of hope for her area.

"The emergence, really, of this trip is women's empowerment, with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as a shining example for all of us, for women around the world, not just women on her own continent," Bush told reporters on her way to Liberia.

Worldwide, the number of women in politics is steadily rising, although they remain severely underrepresented, according to Inter-Parliamentary Union figures which has studied the place of women in parliaments since 1945.

ELLEN Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia.

MICHELLE Bachelet of Chile.

"In 1995, women made up 11.3 percent of all lower houses of parliament, rising to 15.9 percent in 2000 and 16.2 percent in 2005," she said.

Social issues

Despite notable exceptions, such as the tough-minded Thatcher, Arbor's study says engendered their avenues in positions of power tended to put a greater priority on social issues than their male counterparts.

In Michelle's first elected head of state, Sirleaf has urged that women had a central role to play in "ending the cycle of violence" in the world's most failed states, ruled by 14 years of civil war.

"The women of Liberia and the women of Africa, we must ... succeed, and we will," she told the assembly of women who came to support her ahead of her inauguration. AFP

EXHIBIT 7

LUNG CENTER OF THE PHILIPPINES

25 Years of the Lung Center of the Philippines
EXCELLENCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PULMONARY DISEASES

24th Anniversary

"Ugnayan sa Kalusugan, Kalikasan at Kapaligiran"

By: Rey L. Guerrero, Jr. & Sonja Aurora Guerrero

The Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP), after being razed to the ground several years ago, has risen from the ashes and has regained its leadership role in the treatment, care, and management of lung ailments, from the common cough to the most severe forms of respiratory problems.

The Center is celebrating its 24th anniversary at a time when its services are in greater demand. Blame the rising incidence of lung ailments to the growing pollution of our environment.

Studies show that respiratory diseases have increased, particularly in the urban areas, due largely to air pollution. Emissions of gases and solid particulates from motor vehicles and factories, as well as cigarette smoking, have been cited as having contributed to breathing problems.

It is thus not surprising that the Center has adopted as its anniversary theme, "Ugnayan sa Kalusugan, Kalikasan at Kapaligiran" to recognize the role of the environment in the control of health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that lung diseases, especially tuberculosis (TB) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), are among the world's leading killers. These two diseases are caused by unsanitary surroundings, polluted air, and cigarette smoking.

In the Philippines, TB is reportedly the sixth leading cause of death from disease while its equivalent countries like the United States, COPD ranks fourth as a leading killer there.

The Lung Center is not, however, head by the statistics of the problem. Dr. Ramon S. Ruiz, Executive Director of the Center, says that while the situation has become more complex, efforts to meet lung diseases and breathing problems still remain as an urgency.

"Today, the Center is responding more aggressively to the challenges of treating and managing lung diseases," Dr. Ruiz said. "We, at the Lung Center, have continue their quest for excellence in lung and other chest diseases, whatever the situation."

Aiming for Excellence

"At this point in time, we aim to make the LCP the premier Center for lung diseases that will be able to expand its influence all over the Philippines, particularly in the excellence of its services, and the quality and responsiveness of its research and training," Dr. Ruiz added.

To attain this dream, the LCP executive director explained that the Center will undertake researches "that will make the treatment of lung diseases better, simpler, more effective and more affordable."

"We will also continue to train people, so that we could be able to place pulmonologists in all corners of the Philippines and in all major hospitals," he said.

The leadership of the Lung Center recognizes the need for a vision to guide the organization to what it would be in the future. That is why it has adopted its simple straight-forward terms the vision of the Center.

"The premier institution for lung and other chest diseases, providing quality healthcare through excellent service, training, research and education."

The realization of this vision is not far away, judging from the way things are shaping up. There are, however, challenges that should be met head-on.

Within the next five years, the Lung Center of the Philippines expects to be a byword in the treatment of lung and other chest diseases not only in the Philippines but across the region.

The mission of the Center is based on four strategic approaches.

First, the LCP shall provide quality healthcare through state-of-the-art facilities by highly competent and compassionate staff for the improvement of quality of life of its clients.

Second, the LCP shall provide immediate attention to every individual in need, regardless of creed, color, sex, socio-economic status and political affiliations.

Dr. Ruiz reveals that the Center never considers financial capability as a criterion in giving the patients before anything else. Thus, whatever subsidy it could get from the government will be spent to support charity cases.

Third, the LCP shall endeavor to achieve financial stability and long-term sustainability.

This is not the experience of Dr. Ruiz as a professional hospital administrator and manager comes in handy. As a holder of a Master's Degree in Hospital Administration from the Ateneo de Manila University, he has managed to rationalize the operations of the Center in order to raise the needed revenues to sustain its operations.

"We don't have to wait and see later as to any innovative with our income generation," the Center's head said. While the government was able to subsidize the Center in the sum of P200 million last year, other sources of funds had to be tapped and the management system of the hospital itself had to be more efficient in its operations.

And fourth, the LCP shall be dedicated to lung health promotion and advocacy.

Today, the Center continues to undertake community-based programs in cooperation with local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations (NGOs) and civil societies. As an example, the LCP operates the Asthma Club, a support group established for asthmatic patients, as well as the Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS) Program for tuberculosis patients.

Patient Care Center First

The Center offers to patients a wide range of services to lung and other chest ailments. Aside from asthma, tuberculosis, and other pulmonary infections, it also has services to early lung cancer detection and treatment, and smoke cessation. In order to help patients, the Center provides free chest x-ray every 4 months (up to 75 years of age) and free pulmonary function test.

There is also a unit on obstructive sleep apnea, a dangerous breathing condition wherein a person usually stops breathing while asleep. The unit has a staff of 14 technicians, and two open suites funded by Dr. Virginia S. delos Reyes, who just came back from her recent training at the Stanford University.

The major medical services of the Center are provided by five Departments: Pulmonary Medicine, Thoracic Surgery and Anesthesia, Radiology, Pathology and Laboratory, and the Emergency Room/Outpatient.

The Center also maintains a Public Health and Domiciliary Unit (PHDU) that serves as the public arm of the Outpatient Department. It has its own staff and its activities are focused on preventive and promotional programs among patients, relatives, health workers and the general public. The TB Control Program, for example, is one such program of the unit.

As far as the spacious lobby is concerned, it was refurbished and transformed into an extended art gallery. The paintings donated by established and promising artists of the past and installed in the various parts of the building were gathered and displayed in one place at the lobby for greater protection, as well as appreciation by visitors and patients alike.

Sustaining the Center's Operations

Beyond these physical improvements is the significant rise in income of the Center's employees and the growing number of local and foreign physicians who serve as visiting consultants.

To motivate the employees, incentives have been identified and increased, not necessarily through salary adjustments but through benefits through collective bargaining agreement between the employees association and the hospital management. Trainings on entrepreneurial activities among employees have also been encouraged to create additional sources of income.

Dr. Ruiz also envisaged to improving the capabilities of the Center's employees in related concerns: "we do not intend to sacrifice quality healthcare for our patients."

"As a corporate hospital, we really have to earn so that we could operate," he added. Being a government hospital, budgetary support is often not enough to fully support the Center's operations and expansion. He clarified that the subsidy the Center receives from government is purely for indigent patients.

LCP: A Brief History

The Lung Center of the Philippines was officially created on January 16, 1981. However, the idea of a specialty institution for lung diseases was already being entertained as early as 1974.

The fact that the Quezon Institute was not as effective in providing assistance to patients with respiratory diseases (with a 49.4 percent yearly death rate) prompted the creation of the LCP. Through the efforts of the late Enrique M. Fabros, former Health Minister, a 12-hectare lot in Quezon City was acquired from the National Housing Authority (NHA), and construction of the LCP commenced in 1979.

On January 25, 1982, the Center was inaugurated with Dr. Jose R. Reyes as its first Executive Director. She was succeeded by Dr. Carlos A. Zaldivar who expanded the Center's predominantly service-orientation to include research, training and education. Following next was Dr. Fernando A. Maldonado who continued the trailblazing initiatives of his predecessors.

When the Center was burned down on May 16, 1996, the vision to develop the Center as the country's premier center for lung and other chest diseases refused to die. In the face of uncertainties linked largely to the disaster, the Center's current Executive Director Dr. Ruiz was appointed to head the hospital by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Dr. Ruiz, who has been with the Management Services of the Department of Health. An obstetrician, he gave up the practice in 1989 to fully concentrate on hospital administration and management. It was his leadership of the Union Training Regional Medical Center that launched him into national prominence which hastened propose him for the stewardship of the Lung Center.

Dr. Ruiz, who developed a reputation at the Department of Health (DOH) as an effective troubleshooter, was expected only to stay at the Lung Center temporarily. This temporary stint, however, was extended after his assistant as Assistant Health Secretary.

He rationalized the structure and operations of the Center, and encouraged more generating discussion as to help finance the services and the expansion of the hospital facilities. With his expertise in financial management, he mobilized the Center's cash flow and instituted moves to remain operational without sacrificing the quality of services to the patients.

At present, hopes are high among the staff and employees of the Center that its current growth will be sustained and help establish the Lung Center of the Philippines as a key area-center. "The premier institution for lung and other chest diseases providing quality healthcare through excellent service, training and research."

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

(JANUARY 16, 2006 Monday)
- Flag Ceremony
- Opening of the LCP's Anniversary Exhibit (8:00 am)
- Symposium Lecture on Nature by Secretary Francisco T. Duque III (9 am, Session Hall)
- Free Clinic – OPD – PFT, TB Station (East, & Chest X-Ray

(JANUARY 17, 2006 Tuesday)
- Continuation of Free Clinic
- 5 K Walk/Run
- (8:00) Seminar on "Proper Maintenance of Motor Vehicles" (For LCP Personnel) (to date Tuesday)
- (9:00) PMS Exhibition Tour of Various Sites in LCP Personnel (to date Tuesday)

(JANUARY 18, 2006 Wednesday)
- Continuation of Free Clinic
- TV & Radio Guesting
- Continuation of (9:00) PMS Exhibition Tour of Nutrition Island to the Public)

(JANUARY 19, 2006 Thursday)
- Mini Ice Hustle (8:00 am)
- Launching of the "Command for a Healthy Environment" (sponsored by) (9:00) MMDA Lung Center and the Quezon City Government (9:30 – 10:00am) Mmda Meeting Commission for the LCP "Mini Cross Field" with Gov. Rina Gutierrez (9:00) Quezon City Hall Lung, Mayor Bautista, Lung, Mayor Simon, Lung, Rep. Roilo Golez and Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista as Special Guests
- Launching of LCP's "Wellness Jogging Project" (3 laps) Guests with

Marina Mayor Presidente Antonino T. Aquino as Special Guests
- Press Conference

(JANUARY 20, 2006 Friday)
- Inauguration of the LCP "Bo Chu Puppetmasters Facility" (10:00 am) with Congressional Guests Sato and Congressional Girls Pasion as Special Guests
- Mount Lobing (8:30am to 1:00 pm)
- Lung Center Scholarship Night
- Convention of "Mr. & Ms. LCP"

(JANUARY 21, 2006 Monday)
- Thanksgiving Mass – (8:00am) @ Main Lobby
- Jam Session (9:00am) @ Main Lobby with QC Mayor Feliciano Belmonte as Guest Speaker

Inquirer goes to 63rd Golden Globe Awards

From page A1

Jaws McMurtry and Diane Warren) and Best Original Song ("I Love That Will Never Grow Old," by Emilio Estefan Jr. and Gloria Estefan).

The closing segment for "Brokeback" front-ran the all-star members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which votes on and hands out the Golden Globe awards, hosted the film's character in the cunning Diane Keaton.

"Brokeback?" Heath Ledger was shot out by Philip Seymour Hoffman, who won the first Actor (Film, Drama) for his compelling performance as celebrated author Truman Capote in "Capote." Felicity Huffman triumphed as Best Actress (Film, Drama) for her portrayal of a pre-operation transsexual [male to female] in "Transamerica."

The night's biggest upset was by Mary-Louise Parker of "Weeds" who defeated all four "Desperate Housewives" Huffman, Teri Hatcher, Marcia Cross and Eva Longoria.

1st Golden Globe awardees

Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon, the leads in the Johnny Cash biopic "Walk the Line," took home the Best Actor and Best Actress (Film, Musical or Comedy) trophies, respectively.

"Walk the Line" grabbed the Best Film (Musical or Comedy) honors. Phoenix, Witherspoon and Huffman's victories were their first Golden Globe awards.

The evening's first acting honors came years ago for George Clooney in the Best Supporting Actor (Film). Clooney quipped, "This is one early. I haven't had a drink yet," referring to the Golden Globes' legendary party, known for hard atmosphere at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Rachel Weisz, a murdered diplomat's wife in "The Constant Gardener," earned the Best Supporting Actress (Film) trophy.

Also celebrating its first kiss on Globe victory is Palestine's "Paradise Now," a timely drama about the last two days of two suicide bombers, that earned the first Foreign Language Film honors. It beat out China, which had two nominees ("Hero" by Zhang Yimou and "The Promise"), France ("Joyeux Noel") and South Africa ("Tsotsi").

Party of the year

John Williams, whose last Golden Globe win was 10 years ago for "E.T.," won again with his Original Score for his lush music for "Memoirs of a Geisha."

Anthony Hopkins won honors for Best Actor (TV Drama series) for "This is the Best," thereby tied up as he waited on the sidelines for Andgorak to finish his red carpet work.

Goody bags

The night's grand party atmosphere continued with five big after-parties, all held simultaneously on the grounds of the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

The best party was rendered by Warner Bros. and InStyle. Filled with Hollywood A-listers, flowing wine and a rocking live band, prevailed the host and nowhere attended.

Coming a close second was the after-party of Dreamworks, Focus Features and NBC. The master ballroom of sparkling garage was converted into a ballroom.

HBO staked its usual party site...the hotel poolside. The film company 20th Century Fox took over the Spa. The Weinstein Company celebrated at the big outdoor bungalow of old Hollywood, Trader Vic's.

By the end of the evening, most guests were lapping around gazebo hugging the bar, and others enlisted in sort at least $1,500. The show's 50-plus presenters received goodie bags with items costing at least $62,000.

And the winner is ...

Film

Film, Drama: "Brokeback Mountain"

Actress, Drama: Felicity Huffman, "Transamerica"

Actor, Drama: Philip Seymour Hoffman, "Capote"

Film, Musical or Comedy: "Walk the Line"

Actress, Musical or Comedy: Reese Witherspoon, "Walk the Line"

Actor, Musical or Comedy: Joaquin Phoenix, "Walk the Line"

Foreign Language Film: "Paradise Now," Palestine

Supporting Actress: Rachel Weisz, "The Constant Gardener"

Supporting Actor: George Clooney, "Syriana"

Director: Ang Lee, "Brokeback Mountain"

Screenplay: Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, "Brokeback Mountain"

Original Score: John Williams, "Memoirs of a Geisha"

Original Song: "A Love That Will Never Grow Old" from "Brokeback Mountain" by Gustavo Santaolalla and Bernie Taupin

TELEVISION

Drama series: "Lost"

Actress, Drama: Geena Davis, "Commander in Chief"

Actor, Drama: Hugh Laurie, "House"

Musical or Comedy: "Desperate Housewives"

Actress, Musical or Comedy: Mary-Louise Parker, "Weeds"

Actor, Musical or Comedy: Steve Carell, "The Office"

Miniseries or TV Movie: "Empire Falls"

Actress, Miniseries or TV Movie: Jessica Lange, "Grey Gardens"

Actor, Miniseries or TV Movie: Andrew Lincoln, "Longitude"

Supporting Actor: Paul Bettany, "Empire Falls"

Actress, Supporting Actor: Cheryl Hines, "Curb Your Enthusiasm"

Supporting Actor: Tied between Joseph Fiennes, "Elizabeth I" and Chris O'Donnell, "The Grid"

Actress, Supporting Actor: Tied between Joan Allen, "Elizabeth I" and Judy Davis, "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World"

Director: Mike Nichols, "Angels in America"

Screenplay: Peter Morgan, "The Queen"

Original Score: Thomas Newman, "Jarhead"

Original Song: "Our Lips Are Sealed" by Fun Lovin' Criminals, "Empire Falls"

Cecil B. DeMille Award: Anthony Hopkins

"READY when you are, Cecil." Anthony Hopkins nods his consent to allow the moderator of the Cecil B. de Mille Life Achievement Award, which honors the totality of work on film over 40 years.

BI throws out alien rap vs ABS-CBN's news head Maria Ressa

From page A1

the complaint, saying Reyes, an international broadcast journalist, was already a Filipino.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said Dual Reyes—who is also an American citizen—acquired dual citizenship on Dec. 14, 2004 and was issued an identification certificate on Jan. 13, 2005.

Reyes, Reyes (whose full name is Maria Angelita) is a Filipino and does not fall under the BI's mandate, Fernandez said.

"We have no jurisdiction over Filipinos," Fernandez said.

Since Reyes is a Filipino, she does not need to get a work permit from the BI in order to leave, depart, he added.

The complaint was filed by Lito Montilla, who said the need to be the clearance and senior producer of ABS-CBN's International Broadcast Services Group. She is among former ABS-CBN people using the network for illegal dismissal.

ABS-CBN branded the deportation case "a sham issue of harassment."

Natural-born Filipinos

Under Republic Act No. 9225, natural-born Filipinos who have become citizens of another country can apply for dual citizenship because they are deemed not to have lost their Philippine citizenship.

Reyes was thrown button-deaf of the US network CNN before joining ABS-CBN.

Her news job has not been without controversy.

It was under Reyes's helm that the company downsized its news and current affairs staff last year.

Montilla unconvinced

Reyes was also in the news recently when she denied that ABS-CBN's decision to axe the penned flashlight was from Reyes, whose wife, Kyra Sedgwick, was nominated in Best Actress, TV Drama series. "This is the best," Reyes told us as he waited on the sidelines for Sedgwick to finish her red carpet work.

Goody bags

The night's grand party atmosphere continued with five big after-parties, all held simultaneously on the grounds of the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

The best party was rendered by Warner Bros. and InStyle. Filled with Hollywood A-listers, flowing wine and a rocking live band, prevailed the host and nowhere attended.

Coming a close second was the after-party of Dreamworks, Focus Features and NBC. The master ballroom of sparkling garage was converted into a ballroom.

HBO staked its usual party site...the hotel poolside. The film company 20th Century Fox took over the Spa. The Weinstein Company celebrated at the big outdoor bungalow of old Hollywood, Trader Vic's.

By the end of the evening, most guests were lapping around gazebo hugging the bar, and others enlisted in sort at least $1,500. The show's 50-plus presenters received goodie bags with items costing at least $62,000.

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Parrot blamed for breakup: It squawked ...

From page A1

35-year-old call center worker Sara Collins that she was having a 4-month fling with a former colleague when the pet blurted out: "Sara, I love you," British newspapers reported Tuesday.

The bird had previously said, "Hiya, Gary," when Collins' mobile phone rang and mobile-ringing noises when the mates was mentioned on radio or television, but its owner, Chris Barker, from Leeds, northern England, Lancashire, could not.

But the computer programmer—who bought the bird as a shirk and named it after singer David Bowie's alter ego, Ziggy Stardust—said the penny dropped when the couple were snuggled up on the sofa before Christmas.

Moment of truth

"We were watching telly [television] when Ziggy blurted out, 'I love you, Gary' in Sara's voice. I turned laughing but when I looked at Sara, I could tell something was up. Her face was like beet root and she started to cry," the 38-year-old said.

"I felt sick to my stomach. She told me that she'd had an encounter and it just got weak called Gary and that she wanted to finish with me.

"She said she was going to tell me anyway once—until the penny dropped when the couple were snuggled up on the sofa before Christmas.

Goodbye, Ziggy

"She came back on callers her small talon: I was sat. I hope I never see her again."

Collins told newspapers she was not proud of her actions but admitted she never liked Ziggy in the first place.

Taylor—already divorced of a girlfriend—has now given away Ziggy.

"I couldn't get him to stop saying that bloody name ... when else could I do?" he said.

AFP

Payback time: Fil-Am doctors return home

From page A1

to bring medical services to far-flung provinces.

The DFW and the Philippine Coast Guard's BRP Pampanga, normally used for search and rescue operations, set sail for Palawan yesterday afternoon to provide free medical services and health education to residents of Coron.

Hospital ship

The vessel has been turned into a well-equipped hospital ship, carrying at least 35 volunteer doctors and part of the $7.7 million in medical supplies and equipment donated by DFW.

Abelson said the hospital ship would be very useful in an archipelago like the Philippines.

"When medical missions are conducted, it's usually by land or air. But there are several towns that have no access to medical help except by sea or water," he said in a press conference.

The said people who get sick in far-flung provinces usually have to travel hours just to see a medical professional.

Surgery

The 35 foreign and at least 21 Filipino doctors joining the mission will offer a host of medical services, including general surgery and eye operations.

The surgical team will be performing most of its work at the Coron hospital. Montano said some members of the team would try to conduct minor surgery aboard the ship if the waters were calm.

The PCG's search and rescue ships like the BRP Pampanga are equipped with facilities like operating tables and hospital examination to Hawaii.

"More importantly, they would be taught standard operation skills, which are severely lacking among our volunteers," Beltrano said.

Under the MOA, selected DFW nursing students will be sent as interns to ROC.

Dennis Enriquezbala, assistant nursing dean of ROC, said 48 percent of ROC nursing graduates were of Filipino descent.

Hawaii state records show that more than 5,000 graduates of nursing schools in the Philippines are working as nurses in Hawaii.

But she didn't know how and couldn't find the right time. I've no idea who this Gary is. I was devastated. Sara left that night and I've not seen her since.

Goodbye, Ziggy

"She came back on callers her small talon: I was sat. I hope I never see her again."

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RP nurses to infuse young blood into Hawaii health care system

From page A1

The requirement is aimed to improve nursing instruction at UHD. ROC nursing instructors will send instructors to Visas while the UHP will send its nursing instructors to Hawaii for training.

Communication skills

Dr. Jaime Beltrano, executive director of the UHP nursing program, said ROC would conduct reviews for UHP nursing students so they could pass state and other nursing board examinations.

Lingle said her state would not have survived without Filipino health professionals.

Critical role

"Filipino nurses and caregivers play a critical role. The health care system [in Hawaii] could not have functioned without the Filipinos," she said.

The MOA was worked out by Hawaii State Rep. Romeo Ilaqui Jr. Dante Jaime.

"All of the past agreements were just flowery words on paper but these would become flowers that would bear fruit," Ilaqui said.

Airlines buck $5 security fee, say it's gov't's burden

By Nikko Dizon

THE INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORTATION Association (IATA), the trade association representing the international airline industry, has criticized the $5 (P265) security fee proposed by the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA).

According to IATA, the rate of the security enhancements to international airports should be shouldered by the state, referring to the Philippine government, and not the flying public, the Airline Operators Council (AOC) said yesterday.

Sonia Abraham M. AOC vice chair, told the Inquirer in a phone interview that the AOC committed IATA's opinion on the matter while the MIAA conducted public hearings on it last year.

Medvitz said the AOC received IATA's reply in December.

OFWs excluded

The MIAA planned to charge passengers, except Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), with a security fee that would be used "to finance the further upgrading" of the security system of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

The MIAA aims to collect an estimated ₱14 billion annually from the security fee.

In a statement released last year, the airport authority had said the revenue would be used for security enhancements such as the installation of a broad CCTV security system and a trailblazing machine also to monitor; the establishment of a centralized intrusion system and a stable fiber optic network; upgrading all checkpoints; the purchase of protective gears; implementing a passenger profiling system; and the strengthening perimeter area.

The MIAA had conducted two public hearings, where no objections were raised against the imposition of a security fee.

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The WORLD

Edna Lorenna B. Gasco

26 dead in Afghan suicide blasts

AFGHANISTAN—TALIBAN SUICIDE BOMBERS killed at least 26 people in two separate attacks in southern Afghanistan on Monday, a day after a Canadian diplomat and two civilians were killed in another attack in the area.

The combined toll was the worst in a day from suicide bombings in Afghanistan since US-led forces overthrew the Taliban in late 2001 and came just hours after President Hamid Karzai expressed concern about an increase in such attacks.

An adviser to Karzai said the aim of the insurgents appeared to be to frighten Nato members who plan to deploy in the volatile south and dissuade who are due to meet in London at the end of the month to draw up a new long-term assistance plan.

At least 20 people died in the town of Spin Boldak, bordering Pakistan, when a bomber on a motorcycle detonated a device after riding into a playground where hundreds of people had gathered for a festival, officials said.

At least 28 people were hurt in the attack, which the Afghan Islamic Press said happened during a wrestling contest.

"It was a suicide attack," Spin Boldak police chief Abdul Razaq Akhunzada told Reuters. "The person rode his motorbike into the crowd and blew himself up. The intention of this attack was to create horror and fear."

Earlier, another suicide bomber hurled himself in front of an Afghan army vehicle in the heart of the provincial capital, Kandahar, 110 km to the north, killing three Afghan soldiers and two civilians.

Four Afghan soldiers and 14 civilians were also wounded.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for both bombings.

Taliban official Mullah Amir Momin said the attack in Spin Boldak had been aimed at the commander of the Afghan border force, General Abdul Razaq, but he was not in the event.

He said seven Afghan soldiers were among the dead.

"Our plan more attacks on Afghan army commanders because they support the US government in Afghanistan," he said.

Amanullah, a witness to the bombing in Kandahar City, said the attacker appeared to be a teenager.

"I saw a boy of about 15 with an explosives vest running towards the car and then heard the explosion," he said. "I ran for cover and saw the casualties when I got up." Pools and blood could be seen scattered around at the scene.

Speaking at his fortified palace in Kabul, Karzai said increased use of suicide attacks showed Taliban desperation.

However, he added: "They cause insecurity, worry among people... disrupt life. They are a matter of concern for us ... we will use all means to prevent them."

On Sunday, an apparent suicide attack on a Canadian military convoy in Kandahar city killed 36-year-old Glyn Berry, a veteran Canadian foreign affairs official, and two Afghans. Three Canadian soldiers were wounded, two critically.

The past few months have seen a spate of Taliban suicide attacks, mainly targeting US-led troops and Nato peacekeepers, but they have not entered Jumlat assaultists among foreign forces.

Security analysts suspect the Taliban has stepped up suicide attacks after seeing al-Qaeda success in Iraq. Reuters

California executes oldest inmate

SAN FRANCISCO—CALIFORNIA'S oldest death row inmate, a blind and partially deaf convicted killer, was executed early Tuesday, the day after his 75th birthday.

Clarence Allen was put to death by lethal injection after failing to convince Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the US Supreme Court that he was in such poor health that killing him would be cruel.

Frail, diabetic and confined to a wheelchair since a cross-fatal heart attack in September, Allen was executed in San Quentin Prison across the bay from this city according to Lt. Thomas Mullen.

Allen was pronounced dead 18 minutes after the execution began in the prison's death chamber at 12:20 a.m. EST(5 GMT), prison officials said.

"It was very quiet," Mullen told AFP. "There were no problems."

The Supreme Court had refused in a statement on Monday with the justices dismissing Allen's claim that the death penalty being imposed on an elderly, sick and legally blind prisoner constituted cruel and unusual punishment.

The federal court also rejected Allen's argument that the 25 years he spent on death row was cruel and unusual.

Schwarzenegger had denied Allen's request for clemency three days earlier, one month to the day after refusing to halt the execution of Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a notoriously tattooed gangster. AFP

Who really discovered America? Zheng He or Christopher Columbus?

BEIJING—A PROMINENT Chinese lawyer and collector unveiled an old map on Monday that he said could supposedly overshadow one of the revered tenets of Western civilization. Then Europeans were the first to sail around the world and discover America.

The Chinese map, which was drawn in 1763 but the lawyer says is a reproduction of a map dated 1418, presents the world as a globe with all the major continents rendered with accountable that European maps did not have for another century and a half, after Columbus. Dr. Gama, Magellan, Dias and others had completed their renowned explorations.

But the map got a cool reception from some Chinese scholars and seems unlikely to persuade skeptics that Chinese mariners were the first to round the world.

Liu Gang, a painter in a well-known Beijing bus firm and an amateur historian, said Monday that he bought the map for $200 in a Shanghai book store in 2001 and only subsequently discovered its value. He said he had consulted scholars in the field and had done extensive research of his own before deciding to present his findings to the public. "The main issue is not the map itself," he said at a news conference. "It is the potential of the information in the map to change history."

At issue are the seven voyages of Zheng He, whose ships sailed the Pacific and Indian oceans from 1405 to 1432. Historical records show that he explored Southeast Asia, India, the Persian Gulf and the east coast of Africa, using navigational techniques and ships that were far ahead of their time.

But a small group of scholars and hobbyists, led by former British Navy submarine commander Gavin Menzies, argue that Zheng He traveled much further than most Chinese and Western scholars say. Notably, Menzies claims that Zheng He visited America in 1421, 71 years before Columbus arrived there. New York Times News Service

Africa's 1st woman president sworn in

MONROVIA—LIBERIAN ELLEN Johnson-Sirleaf took office as Africa's first elected woman president on Monday, pledging to break with the country's history of corruption and violence that spread war to neighboring states.

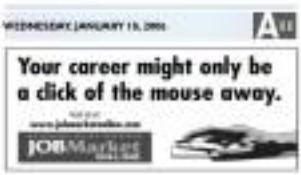
The colorful, open-air inauguration was attended by US first lady Laura Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, signaling US backing for Africa's oldest republic, founded in 1847 by freed slaves from America.

Johnson-Sirleaf, wearing a cream and gold dress, was sworn in to cheers from hundreds of foreign dignitaries and Liberians, including women wearing dresses emblazoned with her portrait.

"To their votes the Liberian people have sent a clear message that they want peace. They want to move on with their lives," she said in her first speech as leader of a nation left without basic services like water and power after a 14-year war that killed up to 250,000 people and ended in 2003.

The Harvard-trained economist, 67, said she would work to restore power to the ramshackle coastal capital Monrovia within 120 days of taking office. As part of her pledge to fight graft, she named the first members of her cabinet, including the ministers of finance and defense, both of whom have international experience and are likely to find favor with donors. Reuters

Government Warning: Cigarette sm



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INQUIRER

OPINION

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Opposition à la carte

IN A SOCIETY IN WHICH TRADITION CARRIES LESS and less weight, it has become surprising when people agonize over whether to follow or set tradition aside. Tradition obviously continues to weigh heavily on Corazon Aquino, since she prefaced her declining to attend the Council of State with an apology. In these inappropriate times, to pay heed to propriety is in itself, a remarkable thing: and that is what she did, she recognized the power of tradition in ordinary times, but said it cannot apply in these extraordinary times.

EDITORIAL

The former president apologized to the country because tradition dictates that an invitation from the President of the Philippines should be viewed as a command. Not because of a fractal hangover, but due to the President being the head of state, and thus, representative of the entire Filipino people. But Aquino believes that when a head of state enters under a cloud of illegitimacy, then tradition must be set aside. Though she is old-fashioned and polite enough to make a distinction between the person and the office, in the case of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the distinction between the respect due the office, and whatever one feels about the person, cannot hold. The question of the President's fitness for office, must involve all things, including institutions.

Aquino, said in her statement last Monday that she could not attend the Council of State for several reasons. First, because the incumbent's presidency remains bounded by issues of trust, without which an exercise such as the convening of the council is useless. Second, because it would be irresponsible of her, after having called for the President's resignation, to do anything that might lead people to think her stand has changed or her position is wavering. Third, because Ms Arroyo herself has made it impossible for the Council to achieve a genuine meeting of the minds. "Rather than resolve the issue in a transparent and forthright manner, the President has opted to muddle it further by insisting that any allusion to the legitimacy issue is part of a grand conspiracy to assassinate her," Mr Aquino explained. In other words, the Council is meant to be an instrument of surrender, not an opportunity for genuine dialogue, much less, reconciliation. In other words, as we described it earlier, the whole thing is an attempt at window dressing.

Aquino's statements and actions at least demonstrate a desire to defend principle through consistent action. That is in contrast to the vainglorying of another former president, Fidel V. Ramos, who has demonstrated the dexterity of a destroyer evading torpedoes, but which accomplishes nothing except to show political dexterity-do to an essentially futile effort. Ramos is not unreasonable, lead certainly is nothing without sacrifice; and the politicians who love to grandstand another day, is certainly many things but not a statesman.

Whether one agrees with her or not, Aquino's behavior and statements show that she is not prepared to sink so low, as to confuse a photo-op with a resolution of the crisis of legitimacy. Better a polite, but firm, refusal to collaborate than to end up being used as a prop, which is what happened to Ramos over the weekend.

The administration's response has been typical. Reacting to Aquino's decision to stay away from the meeting, the Palace insisted that it would proceed. The absence of Aquino and opposition leaders would have "no effect," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. "The meeting will push through as no person or group can dictate on an official function like this."

For what? Ermita insists the Council will be a venue for the administration and the opposition to exchange views on how to solve the country's political, social and economic problems. And yet the opposition will not be there. So what is the public supposed to assume? Perhaps what we have been suggesting all along: that the administration is less interested in a dialogue, and is only looking for an opportunity to conduct a monologue. Or it could be, as Ferdinand Marcos used to do, that the administration has decided to embark on creating its own opposition, to be able to say it is willing to consult with its critics. And who might that be? Perhaps we will see when the photos are released by Malacañang after the Council of State is convened.

Now is the worst time to change the Charter

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

WITHOUT REALIZING IT, ADMINISTRATION congressmen and members of Lakas-CMD, is pushing for Charter change and a parliamentary form of government, are showing very clearly to the people why we should not change the Constitution to have a parliamentary government.

A parliamentary/unicameral government is run by the political party in power as if it is dictatorship or a monarchy. There is no system of checks and balances as we now have in a presidential/bicameral government. The members of Parliament are also Cabinet members, and have influence over the Supreme Court and the judiciary. In other words, they can do pretty much what they want and there is nothing the people can do to stop them, except mount a revolution or a coup d'etat. If the majority party can do what it is now doing in a bicameral government in evolving/headlong into Cha-cha, imagine what it will do in a parliamentary government.

Lakas is railroading a new constitution that is supposed to be in place by the middle of this year, according to Sen Manuel Villar Jr. (not to be sure, that of the Gang of Three—Speaker Jose de Venecia, former President Fidel V. Ramos and President Macapagal-Arroyo. These three are behaving as if they own the Philippines and their Lakas (ari)-mines are behaving like a pack of hungry dogs. Together, will and Villar, a minor pandilycar no different from the Mafia or Al Iqaida but the 90 Thieves. They want a new constitution and a parliamentary government and they're going to have them even if 90 million Filipinos don't want them.

Villar has proposed that there a House (which the new Constitution will abolish) that stands like a big rock blocking the railroad. Their enemy," Sen. Joker Arroyo said of the talks among the Gang of Three on how the Constitution will be changed.

"The intimate to amend or revise the Constitution was coordinated with Congress, absent an initiative line," Ismael Arroyo. "The executive branch has no say in it. But the DIRA PHILIPPINES STRUGGLE WHAT KIND OF strength it represents or means to exercise: you now but Wonday. Juan Flavier, a Lakas member who did not attend the Lakas meeting that day, put it this way: "Unhanging during, monitoring was the diagnosis tells you, safe risk, avert without the threats. Ease a bleak parole (They came on strong with a macho air. They were going to do it even without the Senate. The problem is, the has doesn't allow it)."

Flavier has got a point. But he forgets that neither GMA nor Velez Romeo nor Jose de Venecia, former President Fidel V. Ramos and President Macapagal-Arroyo. These three are behaving as if they own the Philippines and their Lakas (ari)-mines are behaving like a pack of hungry dogs. Together, will and Villar, a minor pandilycar no different from the Mafia or Al Iqaida but the 90 Thieves. They want a new constitution and a parliamentary government and they're going to have them even if 90 million Filipinos don't want them.

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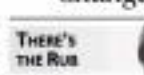
Changes



There's the Rub

Coronado de Quiroz

march of vinegar that the vinegar is fake, a joke wrongly attributed to the Moro peddler. There is nothing wrong with the vinegar, there is everything wrong with the gold. Change the gold, not the vinegar.

The Charter was made by commissioners who fought a dictatorship and distinguished themselves in various fields for their courage and probity. They crafted a Charter that sought to govern a democracy in the worst of times, outlining the fundamental law with the spirit of libertarianism and respect for human rights. Today's call for a new Charter is being led by a non-prosecutor who had earlier the bad while others fought a dictating tyranny, who distinguished himself solely by appearing in public with Cory Aquino on one side and Imee Tantiyal his on the other. He wants a Charter that will prevent democracy from ever breathing again, assigning the making of it to zombies, hustlers and blockheads who are allowed to call their party "Strong."

The public is not crying out "political crisis," the public is tired of 1001 shadow-line party armies probably of PVR and JDV, too. Look at the surveys. No, just listen to your neighbors. They do not say that the overwhelming majority of Filipinos find the Charter defective, they say that the overwhelming majority of Filipinos find their president defective. They do not say that the overwhelming majority of Filipinos want their Charter revised, they say the overwhelming majority want their president removed. They do not say the overwhelming majority of Filipinos want to change their government from presidential to parliamentary, they say the overwhelming majority of Filipinos want to change their governance from fake to genuine.

But then GMA was always confused about the nature of political ruse. She has always thought votes were political matter. She has always thought the sovereign will was political ruse. She has always thought questions of right and wrong were political issues. She is tired of that noise, not the people.

She is right. The people want to reform the political system. It is a rotten system that crushes their underfoot. The people want to reform a political system that allows a loser to use the Child Battens, who is Vice President GMA herself to decide what goes for the country without their knowledge and consent, their knowledge and consent being deemed political noise. They want to reform a political system where they have been excised from it like cancer and replaced not just by unwilling operators but to helpless victims.

The people want to reform a system that has reached the absurd form of a presidential candidate calling up an election commissioner and conspiring with him to thwart the voters' will ... and have supporters demanding afterward that the world prize there is something wrong with that. They want to reform a system that allows the same person to order all public officials, on pain of firing or court martial, to refrain from telling what they know about the elections, that allows the same person to order the tyranny of destabilizers and saboteurs and his game for treachery and voter unrest. They want to reform a system where a political body, finding fault and deficiency in the Charter, can only demand.

The people want to reform a political system that has attained the final stages of imperfection. But has made lying, cheating and stealing the national good, that has turned on the presidential seat for all the world to see the cancer "Hello Garci."

Change the Charter? Not on your life. The Charter is genuine, the President a fake. Change the President, not the Charter.

Bishops meet the poor

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, FOUR people will sadly surrender to bishops' arms around meeting on July 23. Three won't be many poor people. The sad, silly, hopeless to give exclusive close confines of bank. A representative invented the 60 lives of a few people who remember the great work the bishops did for the poor during the brutal last years and wish to have them to continue. Compassion to be the Church's first Point and to become again the staunch arms of the poor they once were.

The bishops may hear the poor as St. Paul heard the people of Macedonia when they called, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

The reasons for poor will penetrate layer to do with food, water, jobs, evictions, education and health. Some have ideas about what changes in government should be made. Not as a group of saints, they have invited the last hundred food, we are told, to the bishops' meeting. The bishops can respond to these issues, whatever they do about the more political ones.

If the bishops, or other good citizens ask, how they can help, some limited suggestions can be made. Any solutions are difficult to assess by government officials as they try to improve their lives. We are the Church to be prophetic and enhance the side of the poor. There are many groups on the side of the poor to be.

If people spend time with the poor, they will understand their fears, hopes, weaknesses, illusions, strengths and needs. They will also understand the often odious manner in which government

COMMENTARY

Jimmy Humphy

seems deals with the poor. They will understand the complexity of problems.

A current issue that illustrates the need of such understanding is that of "voluntary" (Orderliness) along the Humboldt and Humboldt. The order of the relocation called for to begin some 60,000 families between Colorado and Columbia, and 14,000 families in Pampanga will be moved this year, a total of 174,000 people, a number greater than most of our closest populations.

Relevant distributed if the government's first safety in the relocation drive and a road cause for the future. In this process, the government urges poor people on the order to move now to the relocation area in Cabanatuan, although there is no regular water, light, school for the children, jobs, medical facilities, or any possible way a poor man can work in Manila and travel to his family at night to the relocation area, all of which are required by law. Legally families should only be moved when the relocation site is prepared. The government is urging the poor to move under illegal duress.

Government people threaten in the area surrounding the families, "If you don't move, there will be no place for you." The people are afraid they will not have a place if they do not volunteer. There is no one convincing enough to be sure enough to reassure in a manner of legal rights they never will move. They don't even move one another enough to name the government agents who threaten them. Most are like sheep blown along by governments as a desolate plant. Urging people to waive their rights in a pregnant relocation site is unfounded when threats are continuous.

It need is unilateral not on the part of government, according to lawyers.

Not all the poor are afraid, however. On the Barcelona Bastion of the Humboldt we saw two women: Dayrae Viviano, 20, mother of three children, and Amanda Ramos, 44, mother of two. They said eight other families lived for up to 30 years behind the shacks on sand it was demolished by the city on Dec. 20. They were given them, if THEY were informed the order. Branches and ripple bore being one in the dark matter and the police were after them. The poor people were collateral damage.

The people now live on the platform and sleep on the streets. They were offered rudimentary relocation after they complained many times to government about their situation, but they said no. They will not take their children out of school to have none. They will stay on the platform, unsure that it is dangerous or it is, as their children within reluctant.

When we asked Amanda when she would ask the bishops to do if she met them, she said: "Tell the government to give back my husband's tools. He is a plumber [subject] and cared for those with his tools. The government demolition area took them."

"Are you angry?"

"No, just sad. My daughter will have to stop studying in Lyceum. That is the great sorrow."

The bishops may be able to suggest practical tactics, but they also need to come, consider a vision of what life can be and trust in our ancient people who want to help, clerics or lay person, should help with both governments and the people's discernment.

I'm second thought, we all need each help.

Jimmy Humphy works with the Urban New Association.

The memory of a patriarch

I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE LAST SUNDAY TO attend the celebration of the 80th birthday and 50th anniversary of their patriarch, while recalling that his memory lived on in the community where he was born and grew up.

I found myself at the blessing of the new "Kapilya" in Barangay Malupa, Concepcion, Tarlac. The blessing of the chapel, named after the town's patriarchal to refer an early on the life of Isidro Antonio Aquino as part of a book called "20 Stories." The book is due to be released on the 20th Anniversary of the Silay "People Power" Revolution, which is January 20 (previously scheduled important news in the events leading up to this historic event.

For the many, I interviewed two of Don Antonio's daughters: former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreña and former Aquino cabinet, where the book took on, Rep. Noynoy, asked for his participation in the 20th Anniversary of the Silay "People Power" Revolution, which is January 20 (previously scheduled important news in the events leading up to this historic event.

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* * *

I HAD requested the chapel to be small, simple and rustic, and so my story all surprised to behold a sparkling new place of worship decorated with capiz windows. Certainly not mine, nor those Arnold Ariel and his son Arlen Paul "Apo" Pichong's not-in-law and grandson.

To Allan David, who coordinated the ideas, recalled that "Apo" Pichong's dying wish was: "Please don't forget my chapel." And Even Father Allan's own father, who had a hand in the chapel's construction, saw his work as part of a new and exercise, the prior noted, fixing the fact that the old man didn't live to see the chapel's completion.

Like me, Lucy Pichong, many of whose are now professionals in Boston, Texas, earns home for the chapel's blessing, in did the grandchildren and their 90-year-old mother who were also resident in Houston.

Lucy and her children sent their blessings," Mrs. Lucy said, referring to the chapel, as well as their commitment to the community

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

where her husband's memory lives on.

* * *

EERE is the second and concluding part of an article by Edmund Silvestre, which appeared in the Filipino Reporter, a newspaper for Filipino Americans published out of New York, on a group of Filipino professionals who conduct regular medical missions in impoverished areas in the Philippines.

Much of the article was based on an interview with two figures, members of the Philippine American Group of Educators and Surgeons (PAGES): Jaime Ala Silvestre, Sr. and Jr.

PAGES was born in the hospital room of Ceferino Ilo, OSF, pains, born contractions and meningococcus—the last one contracted before the baby's arrivation with reading of the meningo- [illegible] around the brain and spinal cord."

"My specialties in cases involving skin and young children," Dr. Silvestre, Jr. explained, make in their lives is for lifetime," Figueroa said. "We change the child's life by healing him from the stigma and giving him confidence, then it changes the life of the child's family and then the community."

"This is what we get from helping these people, the joy and satisfaction of seeing the lives of these people changed for the better," said Virgilio Ilo, an ear, mechanic who volunteered for PAGES, serving a minimum for up to 10 hours to carry out medical missions in the Philippines.

"He was proud that very part of his organization," said Ilo, a native of La Loma, Manila. "For me, the best part is when I see the parents of the kids crying tears of joy," said Imogen Montero, who heads Team Tarlac. "Their really appreciation of you and thank you endlessly for making their children happy."

* * *

A FREAK accident that knocked out several of retired engineer Tito Villanueva, while he was loading medical equipment into the container, didn't stop him from volunteering.

"Nimmy can't buy the kind of feeling I get from here," said the San Ildefonso, Bulacan-born Villanueva. "They can pass out or say and you experience the joy it brings to your life by helping the poorest of the poor there's no way that you would leave," said Bert Cuela, a retired US Navy officer who is the group's director of surgery.

"Every medical mission gives me the adrenaline rush," added Cuela, who finds from Lipa City. "Seeing happiness in the faces of these people is incredible. If you missed one medical mission, it would make you feel like you missed a big part of your life."

For 15 years, politics, jealousy and power struggle never found their way on PAGES, a feat for a large 60-Am organization that deals with a complex operation.

"We have been very conservative and very profession," Figueroa pointed out. "The secret is we never talk about who the group leader is. We are all officials here. Any ordinary name. We just do our thing and we don't should on party politics, because we respect people's opinion."

Early this year, PAGES learned its Philippine chapter chaired by Ambassador Precious Sevilla, Philippine envoy to Kosovo and secretary general of the Unesco Commission of the Philippines, is a now working on its tax exempt status in the Philippines. The group also welcomes possible tie-ups with medical organizations, who may need support for medical supplies or even medical equipment.

"Our vision at PAGES is to see various medical groups joining together to hold a monthly medical mission in the Philippines," Figueroa said. "Many Filipinos badly need our help and we should not discourage others to respond. We only live once and why not make the most of it by helping the less fortunate."

"That's what I'm doing," Villanueva, a retired brute," he said. "I think that's what's everyone's purpose in life should be."

A church of the people and history

LAST TUESDAY, JAN. 12, 2006, PEOPLE GATHered at the Church of the Holy Sacrifice on the University of the Philippines campus to witness the unveiling of a bronze mother on the building, resulting in known and, most importantly, its declaration as a National Historical Landmark by the National Historical Institute (NHI) and an Important Cultural Property by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

The unveiling of the bronze mother on the façade of the UP College of Engineering and Industrial Technology Building (CEIT) was an important milestone in the conservation efforts of the UP College of Engineering and Industrial Technology Building (CEIT) and

If this lie is let to stand

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE one, 9 column of Conrado de Quiroz. The much lacking-award columnist has once again put his fingers, or rather his pen, where it hurts. As a foreigner, living for more than 15 years now in this country, I too find the "narcoes" effect....as Dr Quiroz puts it....of the "systematic" of those ruling with out legitimacy.

What fascinating current affairs with our Filipino friends. I notice that the attitude toward this issue is increasingly shifting from one of initial willingness to one of annoyance, annoyance with the topic that is.

As a Germain, I notice it is not only among the bunch of pronarcos, who were instructed to come back home the previous day.

2. The employees at counter 38 started serving the pensioners at 8:02 a.m. and immediately began interviewing the second person in line. When she was about to attend to the fourth pensioner, who happened to be Angela, a supervisor approached her to clarify some pertinent procedures of the AOP.

The SSS does not condone any discourtesy by employees to our members. The head of SSC-QC has issued a strict directive to all employees of the branch, specifically those assigned at the AOP area, to report to their posts promptly after punching in. SSC-NPC has commissioned this to Supalio.

The SSS management does not stop looking for ways to improve its services to members. In fact, during the past few months, the SSS has instituted innovations in the procedures with the concurrence of pensioners in mind.

If a pensioner is unable to go to an SSS branch for check-up, he or she can request for a home visit by an SSS representative. Pensioners can also communicate with the SSS by responding to its letters, or by sending a notification that he or she is alive and eligible to receive pension. The notification may be issued by a regular SSS employee who has been working in the SSS for at least five years or by a teller in the bank where they have an account. The SSS even accepts confirmation from the postmaster in her supervision.

The AOP program, which was started early last year, is part of the reforms intended to ensure that pensioners get the right benefits and that the SSS can recover money erroneously sent to those who have died, unearthed or recovered from their disabilities.

—JOEL ENGLACIS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, QC

LETTERS

'Criminal mediocrity'

RAUL MANGLAPUS IN HIS Jan. 6 column called attention to an insidious plot to abridge the freedom of speech. He was referring into the proposed constitution a provision like that. "No law shall be passed abridging the responsible exercise of the freedom of speech." Plus the brief "the author seeks to be heard." Spooked, former head of Quezon City.

Let's do away with the constitutional tinkering. Share evil will come out of it even if there is a chance that the "inactive" provisions might be taken out. The least common denominator will prevail. Filipinos are dramatic, criminal and mediocrity.

—ROSS TIPON,
rossdpinas@yahoo.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the Philippine Inquirer and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Sigue and Maocardo Streets, City of Makati or send e-mail to inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number for e-mail address, for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Days of pride and glory

THE 2005 SOUTHEAST ASIAN Games is over, but the thrill, joy, excitement and the pride it stirred in Filipino hearts linger. In SEAG, national unity stood out. Every Filipino rose to be counted. Personal and political differences were laid aside such that the XXV Games seemed cast to be a whopping success.

In the days of the Roman Empire, winners were awarded with a crown of laurels for every victory. Nowadays, they are awarded with gold, silver or bronze, with words of commendation should also be uttered to extol the courageousness of the following:

1. The security force: police, soldiers, Marines, pilots, volunteers who kept the peace and order during the Games.

2. The competitors who gave their best.

3. All the peace- and fun-loving concertgoers, from distance to little.

4. The cheering crowd ever present to boost competitors' morale.

To each and every one of them, I offer my exquisite "Cross of Loyalty to Country" award.

We showed to the world that competitive events like the SEAG can be fun, and can promote healthy camaraderie among peoples.

And, we know Our Filipinos that the allotted peace to reign during the games, from start to finish.

Thank you, Father God, you let us feel you really love us.

—RICARDO G. LERRIDO

SSS does not condone discourtesy to members

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE letter of Imelda Supalio (PDI, 1/6/2006). Supalio complained against the alleged discourtesy of employees assuming counter 38 at SSS of the Members Assistance Center (MAC) in the Social Security System, Quezon City branch.

The SSS-MAC investigated the incident. The inquiry bore out the following:

1. We looked at the time cards of the employees who Supalio said came in late. Per their time record, the employees at counter 38 arrived at 8:02 a.m. and not 8:15 as she alleged, while the employee at counter 40 punched in at 7:59 a.m. and not 8:05. The personnel in window 39 arrived a few minutes after 8 a.m. and not 8:14 a.m.

2. The employee at counter 39 did not immediately accept her post because she had to attend to a pensioner, who was submitting documents required under our Annual Confirmation of Pension (ACOP) program. The pensioner was a priority because she

Vets deserve share of earnings from RP property in Tokyo

LAST DECEMBER, THE INQUIRER reported that a Philippine government property in Tokyo was loaned for the state of P200 million. (PDI, 12/8/05)

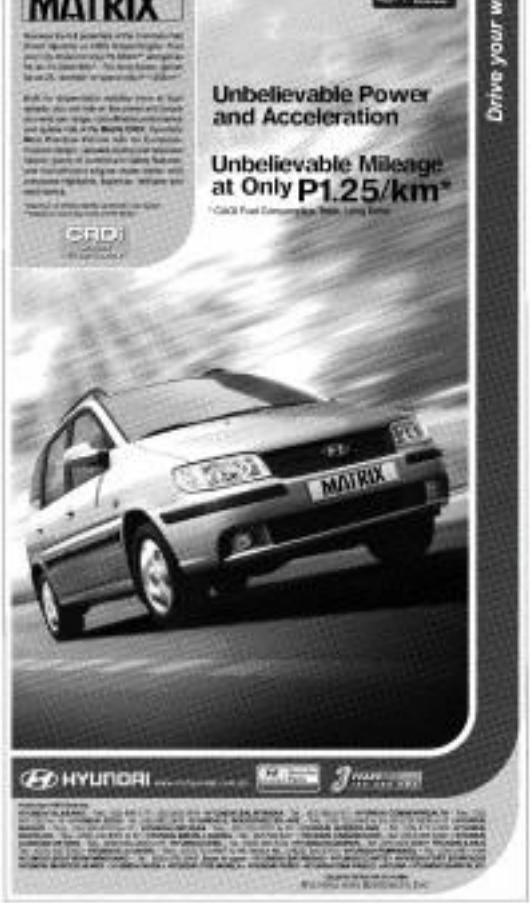
I believe the Philippine public has the right to know all the details of this government transaction. Aside from being a national property, what is the reason why the property was awarded to the Philippine government as part of Japan's post-war reparations for the damage it inflicted on the Filipino people during World War II.

If I remember right, the Tokyo property was declared by both the Philippine and Japanese governments as duly calculated to have. In the nearly 500,000 USAFFE and Philippine Scout soldiers, guerrillas and guerrilla supporters (who) known as World War II veterans).

Today, the number of our living World War II veterans is down to about 50,000. Most of them live in private economic conditions and are not given by our government what is due them under the law. If the original intention for the use of this Japan property must be followed, then our World War II veterans justifiably deserve all or a significant portion of the national government's annual earnings from the Tokyo property.

The Office of the President, the Department of National Defense, the Department of Finance and the Department of Budget and Management should take steps to make sure our veteran heroes get all the benefits they are entitled to under the law. For what is the use of the law if the government itself just disregards it?

—PERCY L. SIN-JUAN JR.,
national commander,
Golden Arch Fraternal Society Inc.,
[illegible] of
World War II veterans,
Edifice Tower, Bridge Centre,
Pasig City



Unsolicited paid text messages

I AM A CMEX SUBSCRIBER OF THE INQUIRER. The paper makes for good reading, especially the Sunday Inquirer version.

But I am writing the Inquirer because, to tell the truth, I'm tired of having harassed by the pesteo text messages of a mobile phone company. They just keep on coming, these unsolicited, unwanted, unsubscribed-to text messages, such as those wordless ring, tones and those of celebrities I don't care about.

Trouble is, every time I receive one of these tones or picture messages, my prepaid load gets P0.50 to P1.50 poorer.

I notified the company's PR department once, and the guy who answered promised to do something about it. That was many months ago, but until now the telecommunications company keeps harassing me with unwanted messages.

I thought the mobile phone companies have been prohibited from sending unsolicited picture messages, but it seems the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) is helpless, powerless and useless when it comes to unfair trade practices.

Who can I turn to for help, to stop the valuable phone company from sending me these messages? (Do not tell me to ask my celebrity to stop sending me messages. I do not watch the idiot box or even TV that discusses their personal lives. I simply do not care about celebrities. And I do not like their choice of ringtones.

I hope that through the Inquirer, this problem will be solved. It's not only me complaining about this annoying practice of mobile phone companies. My friends have also been complaining about this practice, which not only deprives me of my prepaid load but also disturbs me during meetings and interviews, and disrupts my concentration when I'm writing an article.

—MEDEL GARCIA,
Fairview, Quezon City

Ramos and Filipinos, Clinton and Americans

IN ITS ISS. 4 ISSUE, THE INQUIRER REPORTED that former President Fidel V. Ramos, Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Ernesto Maceda met on the first working day of the year, handing open solutions that they were for voting ten different.

Drilon is being eyed as "acting president" by a multisectoral group that wants to take over the Arroyo administration.

Two weeks ago, Ramos expressed as a "non-universal idealist" a proposal by the Alaka Lakbay-coalition Consolidative Committee to scrap the 2007 elections. Ramos threatened to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo unless she declared by New Year's Day that she was against the move.

Ramos should have just kept quiet and enjoyed his retirement from politics. His master was divisive. He was cast for "No" vote in a plebiscite. Like any other citizen, on the proposed constitutional revision.

In the 1998 US presidential elections, former US President Bill Clinton just kept silent when Democratic presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman (an Orthodox Jew) insisted instead issue of Florida in Republican George W. Bush and Richard Cheney. Nationally, Gore was winning in both popular and electoral votes.

On Dec. 8, 2000, the Florida Supreme Court ordered the manual recounting of ballots in favor of Gore, because the Democrats' strongholds. Bush's legal team appealed to the Supreme Court and sought an injunction to stop the recount.

By Dec. 11, 2000, the US Supreme Court had ruled to reverse the Florida Supreme Court. Bush and Cheney were sworn in as president and vice president, respectively on Jan. 20, 2001.

The majority of the Americans said that the US Supreme Court, not the electorate, determined the outcome of the elections.

The same thing happened in the Philippines when Ms Arroyo was sworn in as President by then Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. on Jan. 20, 2001, notwithstanding that the impeachment trial of President Estrada was aborted after the prosecutors walked out of it. In spite of their dastardly act, Estrada did not hold the prosecutors in contempt. This was reported on June 30, 2001 issue. Ms Arroyo was sworn again twice in as President—not acting—by Estrada despite the pending electoral protest that Fernando Poe Jr. filed amid allegations that Ms Arroyo rigged the 2004 presidential elections.

Even though Clinton and the Americans who voted for Gore were not satisfied with the Supreme Court decisions, they remained calm. There was no parliament of the streets, no rallies and demonstrations calling Bush to step down. Nobody raised the suspicion that Florida Gov. Jeb Bush was responsible for the Florida election debacle. Incidentally, Governor Jeb is the brother of George W. Bush.

—ELEUTERIO PANTORES,
Bautista Subdivision,
Concepcion I, Marikina City

Who's manning PCA Laguna?

THE NOV 7, 2005 ISSUE OF THE INQUIRER carried a news item titled "Negros farmers get assistance to plant coconuts." It mentioned that "the Philippine Coconut Authority will implement a pilot one-day farm program to encourage farmers to plant coconuts" and that under the plan, farmers would be initially provided with seedlings of early bearing dwarf coconuts. It also reported that the program was open to farmers with one-half hectare to five hectares of land.

On Nov. 9, 2005, I mailed a letter addressed to the officer in charge of the PCA in Pototan, Alaminos, Laguna, asking him if the PCA has a similar "plant-now-pay-later" program in Laguna. I mentioned in the letter that I own a parcel of land in Sta. Cruz (Laguna) which I would want to be planted with the PCA's early bearing dwarf coconuts.

It has been more than a month since then, but until now I have yet to hear from PCA Laguna or its officer in charge.

—FERNANDO TOMAS,
17 Sitio Angel Hut, Sta. Cruz, Laguna

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

E-mail us: provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Jun Bautista
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Dog meat eating doesn't hound Cordillera natives

By Desiree Caluza
Sagada, Mt. Province

JACKSON BASNIG, A 56-YEAR-old native of Sagada, Mt. Province, has been eating dog meat for as long as he can remember.

While the issue of butchering dogs for food has remained contentious, forcing motivating dog meat should not be such a sensitive topic or judged by those who do not know the natives in the Cordillera.

"It tastes natural, like eating pork or chicken. It is part of our culture and there is no way that can be stopped," he said.

Basnig, Mr. Provincial Tourism Office of Sagada, Mt. Province, said that while American missionaries considered head peanuts when they introduced Christianity to the Cordillera natives, rituals and traditional practices, like dog meat eating, had persisted.

"It may be that the American missionaries did not try to discourage or prohibit dog meat eating because they knew that it was part of our culture, diet and luxury," said Billip.

Bro. Mariano Tagaimo, however, guards parts of Sagada, and rituals involving dogs had been practiced by his ancestors who were involved in tribal wars.

"Those who came back from the war had to be cleansed in a ritual called the dim-ya. A dog had to be sacrificed to cleanse [a warrior] because he was perceived to be dirty after killing [an enemy]," said Tagaimo.

Accounts of Sengpet's frankness and doubt peoples also cited dogs as ritual animals when tribal war was rampant in parts of the mountain region.

Healing ritual

Pontiac Hee-Dee, Wanag Inala, in his 1987 book "Treasury of Beliefs and Rituals," said the dog was the sacrificial animal in a healing ritual called the cosso.

The Kankanaey of northwest Benguet practice the cosso in connection with tribal wars, Inala said. The ritual is performed to prevent the spirits of those killed in battle from haunting the survivors, he said.

"Since blood was spilled, the cosso was performed to cleanse or justify those who participated directly or indirectly [in the battle]...but the cosso, the ritual animal is the dog so the belief that it barks and, therefore, can drive away the haunting spirits," he said.

Five men are chosen to participate in the ritual. They carry bolos and spears and wear woven bamboo headgear decorated with feathers.

The warehousing for warehousing, a native priest's first name is the next to go on a headhunting expedition to simulate a battle. They find an imaginary enemy in the form of a bolo tree. The leader cleans his spear into the trunk while the rest cut down the branches.

'The enemy's head'

As they dice off the bad, the men chant, "Si-ako!" (We got your), followed by "Ummel Omang!" The leader pierces the bro's with his spear, shouting, "Say si tekok si in-ibaw (the) ti bro's to the back of the enemy!"

The warehousing chew asks the warriors, "Sino ay? (Whose head is that?)." The warriors respond: "Tekok si' bun (The head of our enemy)."

The tribal priest asks the men as he lays their weapons on the ground and the sacrificial dog near the weapons. After the prayers, the warriors slit the dog's throat and let blood is gathered in a bowl. The animal is then singed, slaughtered and sliced into pieces for cooking.

While the meat is being cooked, the warehousing chants the (grandpa [chief priest]) and performs a ritual dance.

The Rabit, who live in the southeast part of the province, call the practice cosso.

In the terms, Inala said, the dog's bile was "cured" for seizure. If the reading is good, it is believed that the spirit has been appeased and will never haunt a person again.

The priest [takes] of the legs and the ailey (liver) are roasted for another offering to the spirits. The rest of the meat is cooked in a cat.

The blood is contained in a cleaned intestine to make the pinuyop (blood sausage).

When everything is cooked, the meat is presented to the spirits. The warriors and other community members then partake of the food.

After the feast, the warehousing and the warriors sing the anglu (ritual song) and beat metal plates to a rhythm similar to that heard when rain is hard coming.

"Taboo is observed after performing the cosso. The material offerings are then placed in a corner where no man or animals may step on them," Inala wrote.

"The warehousing and the warrior characters in the ritual are not allowed to sleep with their wives for the night. They have to sleep somewhere else."

In Mt. Province, the dim-ya is performed in reunite a person who had committed a crime.

"If somebody is sentenced, imprisoned and released, he is not allowed to enter the community until they offer a dog in the sip-sip in place where Cordillera elders meet to settle disputes or discuss community issues.

"The dim-ya is part of the cleansing of the person who is presumed to be dirty because of the guilt he has done," Tagaimo said.

Alma Dugan, an elder from Barangay Balikling in Sagada, said the person who is the subject of a dim-ya was not allowed to eat the dog meat offered in the ritual. Other community members are not allowed to eat the sacrificial animal, but they can partake of dog meat that is not used in the ritual.

Only elders who perform the dim-ya eat the offering, said Gov. Maximo Dalog. The ritual bears itself so if others eat it, he said.

Dugan said people would usually volunteer their dogs for the ritual, and it was only in recent years that sacrificial dogs were bought.

Dogs are not raised commercially in the region, he said. Most of the dogs are bought from local residents for P1,000 per animal.

Tagaimo said dog meat eating was also practiced in the Cordillera because the natives believed that the meat could warm up the body, especially during the cold season.

Dr. Charles Cheng, a local historian, said the Chinese who helped build the Banaue Road in the early 1900s introduced different ways of preparing dog meat dishes.

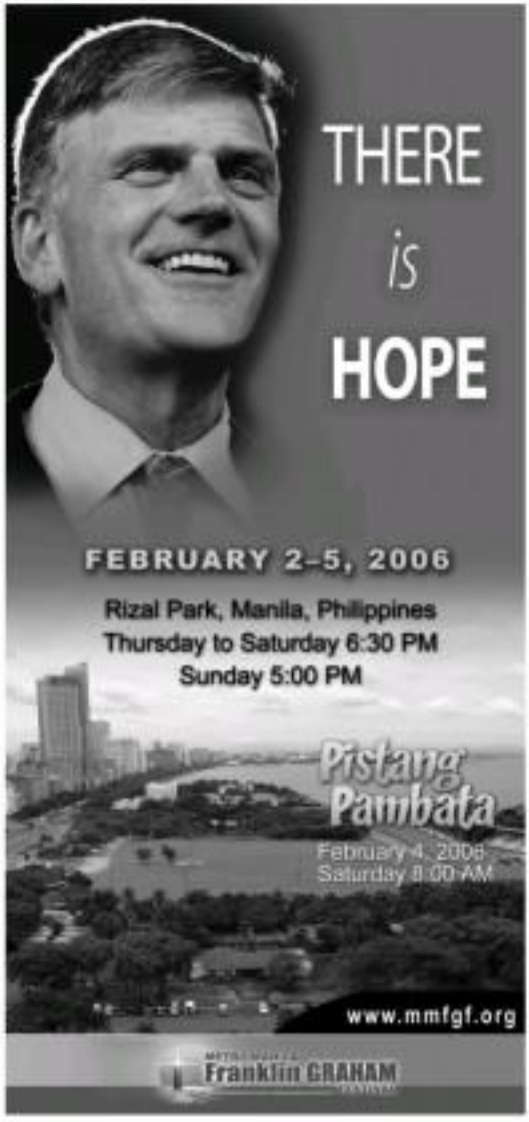
The Chinese, he said, taught the locals how to prepare adobong aso and a special dog soup cooked with spices and medicinal herbs brought from China.

DOGS are sacrificial animals in the Cordillera. They are offered in rituals to protect tribe members from harm. (STORY)

In The Know

What the law says

REPUBLIC Act No. 8485, or the Animal Welfare Act of 1998, criminalizes the sale of dog meat, even though it provides a way out for many Cordillera communities that use dogs as ritual offerings. Section 6 allows the slaughter of dogs "when it is done as part of the religious rituals of an established religion or sect or a ritual required by tribal or ethnic customs of indigenous cultural communities."



Interaction painting: A lot of it is 'pakiramdam'

ALLAN Cosio applies the finishing touches on his work during an interaction painting at Camp John Hay. (STORY)

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

INTERACTION PAINTING, WITH several painters working on one canvas, is like a form of play and sharing. So says painter Rafael Cuni who, with Bri and Allan Cosio, Egay Fernandez, Tiny Mayda, Herman Allegre, Gig and Vincent de Pio, Gene Gonzalez and Jerome Reyes, filled up two four-feet-by-eight-feet panels at the Camp John Hay Suites in Baguio City.

The 10 make up the Shamrock Group of Artists that started painting sessions in 1994 when Bri Soler put up the Art Infusion Gallery.

Cuni is challenged by interaction because it primarily requires the Filipino trait of "pakiramdam" or being sensitive to another's needs.

"The titles should be good," he says. "You should understand one another. It's not just a matter of having talents and skills. You should know the same wavelength or else you get extremes, someone doing abstract and another doing realistic painting in one piece."

Gig de Pio, a master participant, defines interaction as an occasion for artists to get together for a fellowship, an exchange of ideas and beliefs. On this social activity a true artist realizes where he/she stands.

"An artist needs to know what other artists are doing either to forward his/her ideas or not to be doing what the others are already doing," he says.

He remembers the early interactive works in the 1970s of Mayda, Alfredo Perez, Bonnie Edilenes, Sobrado Mendoza and the late Fernando Otanjo, Oscar Laguipo and Ordi Orlando, who competed in the Saturday Group that used to hang out at Tasa de Oro in Quiapo, Manila, for art talk, gossip, jam, coffee and painting exploits.

De Pio said to observe the interactive activities that require compromise. "They were making together, but their styles were identifiable, like their own handwriting. They used prominent forms and symbols so they can be identifiable."

He appreciates the artistic freedom of his paint-partners. "Interaction is like dancing. You don't step on the toes of your partners."

Meanwhile, the Shamrock Group continues the dynamic art from the Saturday Group started.

Across the NATION

Text or fax your feedback: inquirer net text/digi/sky message to 2287 (Globe) or 383 (Smart); Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Cops confirm Quezon 'jueteng' return

LUCENA CITY—POLICE IN QUEZON HAVE FINALLY admitted that the illegal numbers game "jueteng" is back in the province with a vengeance and is being operated by a certain Charing Magbuhos.

Yesterday, Supt. Gilmore Montano, Quezon police chief of investigation and intelligence, admitted to the lawmen.

Montano said police launched operations with local and village officials to stop jueteng.

The total collection of jueteng in Quezon during its heyday was said to be P3 million daily.

Intelligence reports named one Charing Magbuhos as the one behind organized jueteng operations in the province.

In a guerilla-type operation, Jueteng drivers are held in strategic places, in roaming vehicles and, sometimes, in a boat in the high seas, to escape arrest, police said.

"Our order to chiefs of local police stations is to immediately stop the jueteng operation under pain of immediate relief from their post under the existing police-one policy," Montano said.

Recent raids on suspected jueteng dens in several Quezon towns by the Camp Crame-based Anti-Illegal Gambling Special Operation Task Force yielded no arrests.

Montano said they also received reports that 021 is becoming a front for jueteng.

The game mechanics of 021, which is run by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, is similar to jueteng as players bet on two numbers ranging from 1 to 31.

However, according to an insider, the reserved jueteng operation in the province is only a rundown to the introduction of the Small Town Lottery, not only in Quezon but in most areas in Southern Tagalog.

"In the coming days, there will be no more jueteng operation, guerilla or organized one. STL will be vented. As a matter of fact, some of the cabos have already handed the panel of jueteng collection for an picture taking for their PCSO-issued identification card," the informant said.

In Naga City, the persons were arrested for collecting 021 bets in suspicious they were working for jueteng operations.

Senior Supt. Ramon Miguela, police provincial director of Camarines Sur, said the bet collectors were arrested in a raid on 021 booths in Barangay San Francisco in Naga.

He said the 021 bet collectors were known jueteng bet collectors.

Mayor Jesse Robredo, in a letter to PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao on Jan. 16, reported the resurgence of jueteng in three towns in Camarines Sur.

But the mayor of Calabanga, Camarines Sur, one of the towns mentioned by Robredo, denied the existence of jueteng.

Calabanga Mayor Evelyn Peredo said it was very unusual and inappropriate for Robredo to point to her town as one of the jueteng areas in Camarines Sur.

Magtolis said he called on the DG, PCSO to stop the operation of 021 because this was being used for jueteng. —Delfin Mallari Jr. and Joan Bantolino Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 Vizcaya cop chiefs fired over 'jueteng'

By Melvin Gascon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SOLANO, NUEVA VIZCAYA—THE police director of Cagayan Valley ordered the immediate relief of the police director of Nueva Vizcaya following the arrest of 13 suspected "jueteng" bet collectors on Monday.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, regional police director, said the relief of Senior Supt. Robert Mangaccat, provincial police director, and that of Chief Insp. Francisco Palatnan Jr., local police chief, was in line with the "one strike" policy imposed on police officials by Director General Arturo Lomibao, Philippine National Police chief.

Lomibao warned police chiefs that the first confirmed presence of illegal numbers game within their areas would immediately result in their relief.

Members of the PNP's anti-illegal gambling special operations task force on Monday swooped down on a house in Barangay Ventura here, where theater-a-day drawings supposedly being conducted.

The operation, all agents aged 20 to 56, said no bloc but were eventually arrested by policemen.

They were taken to the provincial police office where charges of violation of Republic Act 9287, or the revised anti-illegal gambling law, were filed against them.

The arrest of the suspected collectors (bet collectors) came just two days after Lomibao, in a visit here on Tuesday, dismissed reports that the organized illegal numbers game had been revived in the province.

Quoting a report from another task force he earlier sent here, Lomibao said the supposed jueteng activities turned out to be collections for 021, a government-run lotto game. —With a report from Gaijel del Pozo

Installation of new Tanauan mayor ordered

THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions has ordered the full implementation of its resolution installing Jimia Torres Aquino as the rightful mayor of Tanauan City in Batangas and ordering incumbent Mayor Alfredo Ermino to vacate his post.

In its writ of execution issued Jan. 16, the poll body directed the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Batangas provincial election supervisor, Philippine National Police and other authorities to enforce its Dec. 22, 2005 resolution declaring Torres-Aquino as the true winner of the 2004 May elections.

The four-page order by the poll body's Second Division has ordered Ermino "to immediately vacate the office of the Mayor of Tanauan City, Batangas and to cease and desist from discharging the powers and functions of the said office ..."

According to the Dec. 22 resolution, Torres-Aquino is the rightful winner with a 3,192 vote margin over Ermino after a revision of the ballots.

The Comelec Second Division is chaired by Commissioner Mehol K. Sadain with Commissioners Rufino Javier and Florentino Tuason Jr. as members.

The 455-page resolution found defective the results of the City Board of Canvassers' canvass during Ermino's reign, 24,942 votes against Aquino's 29,650 votes or a supposed lead of 3,708 votes.

An election protest filed by Aquino on May 28, 2004 alleged fraud in the balloting and led to a revision of ballots in all precincts from the 242 precincts of the 28 barangays of Tanauan City comprising the Comelec.

Last Jan. 6, more than 700 supporters of the unlawfully Comelec declared mayor-City Hall premises and assailed the Comelec resolution as a sham.

The protesters, led by the Kalipunan ng mga Tanauenhin Para sa Soberanya Tinig ng Tao (Kattapat), accused election officials and Torres-Aquino of unscrupulously pressuring the results of the last elections.

Gina Rodriguez, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CELEBRATING ABRAHAM

Muslim migrants of Baguio convene in their finest garments on Sunday at Burnham Park to celebrate the annual feast of Eid Ha, a commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of himself to God, which reveals the roots Islam shares with Christianity. The shalmar-kameez silhouettes a morning ritual of sermons on the last month of the Muslim calendar.

21 Negros mayors face raps for open dumps

By Beng G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—TWENTY one city and municipal mayors in Negros Oriental face administrative charges for their failure to build sanitary landfills as mandated by Republic Act (RA) 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Central Visayas regional office (DENR 7) was known to the mayors in mid-December directing them to comply with RA 9003 or face charges and the closure of their open dumps, said Charlie Sabay, the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Dumaguete.

Mayors who failed to comply with RA 9003, which took effect in 2001, all local governments under [LGUs] in the country only have three years within which to convert their open dumps into a sanitary one.

All LGUs were mandated to establish a sanitary landfill or before Jan. 26, 2006. Failure by LGUs to comply with the law would also mean that local chief executives and DENR personnel face administrative sanctions, Sabay said.

The LGUs that were directed to comply with RA 9003 were the cities of Bais, Canlaon and Tanjay and the towns of Basay, Sta. Catalina, Vallehermoso, Siaton, Zamboanguita, Dauin, Bacong, Valencia, Sibulan, Amlan, Sta. Catalina, Mabinay, Manjuyod, Bindoy, Ayungon, Tayasan, Jimalalud, La Libertad, Tanjay, Guihulngan and Bais.

In Negros Oriental, only the cities of Bais, Canlaon and Bayawan and the town of San Jose have their own landfills, said Mario Aragon, the regional environment management specialist of DENR.

Aragon said LGUs are required to use facilities and equipment that effectively dispose of garbage. They are also required to separate solid from liquid wastes.

Aragon and Sabay agreed it would not be easy to build sanitary landfills because of financial constraints, as a sanitary landfill could cost at least P10 million.

Pabay said he would call a meeting with the mayors to find ways how to finance the landfills.

Roundup

'Bakikboy ans' build homes

BAYBAY CITY—Former Quality turned 93-year-old some 500 volunteers including homes for poor families at Sitio Gutad in Barangay Hambongan as part of General Kalinga Foundation's project. Mayor Rosella Recamora said the building spirit helped him for a week not only to help the needy but also to prepare graduates for homeless residents. They also pledged to finance the construction of two houses in the village.

—Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Village official slain

GAMBERI, Nueva Vizcaya—A village official here was killed Sunday allegedly by a relative after an argument over the lawn cemetery in Barangay Bang-lang. Romeo Aong, 52, village councilor of Barangay Magsaysay Hill, was shot and killed allegedly by a cousin identified as Noah Aong. Witnesses said Romeo had fled after which the suspect drew his gun and shot the victim.

Dan-Mican Cleto, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Koreans in English camp

PEÑAFRANCIA, Oriental Mindoro—The baseline resort has become a favorite among Koreans because of its scenery and good service. Ry, said Dong-sil Golden, organizer of the English camp. Koreans come here for English classes during winter (Jan. 1 to Feb. 3) and in summer. The Philippines serves as a teaching ground for basic English skills, added Golden.

Mahinay T. Hirala, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Missing teacher found dead

CALBAYOG, Laguna—The remains of a missing female teacher was found here on Wednesday. Elena C. Dandael, 28, and a teacher of the Our Lady of the Abandoned Catholic School in Pulang Lupa in Montalban City, was identified through her scissors and belongings that were discovered in a drainage canal in Sitio Kabayo in Barangay Lambac here, police said. Police Senior Supt. Amerigo R. Torio said the victim's father, Ernesto Dandael, informed police that his daughter had been missing since Oct. 18 last year.

Rolando E. Peña, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Windsurfing competition

PEÑAFRANCIA, Oriental Mindoro—The Philippine Windsurfing Association (formerly Windsurfing Association of the Philippines) in coordination with the Philippine Board Sailing Association has announced the opening of the Puerto Galera Windsurfing Open on Feb. 22-26 at the Puerto Galera Bay. The competition is the first in the Southern Luzon and aims to promote recreational participation, sustainable tourism and training of athletes, said Carmelo Garcia. The competition is considered a national event in windsurfing. For details, contact 09178830354 or (02) 241-3264.

Mahinay T. Hirala, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cordillera dump of pesticides, says doc

By Dalmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE Cordillera's vegetable farms have become a dumping ground of chemical-based farm inputs and unless organic farming practices are changed, these chemicals will continue to threaten the environment and farmers' health, a doctor here said.

"In Benguet alone, diseases among farmers have been observed to be increasing due to the frequent use of commercial pesticides and insecticides," said Dr. Charles Chong, director of the Baguio-Filipino Chinese Hospital in Baguio City.

Chong said his clinical studies have shown high incidence of cancer, asthma, skin diseases and allergy among farmers.

He presented these findings to farmers who attended the First Cordillera Organic Agriculture Congress at the Benguet State University in La Trinidad.

Chong, who has devoted part of his medical practice in researching the ill effects of chemical spray on vegetable farms, won a lifetime awardee of the Dr. Jose Rizal Award for Excellence in Medicine and Community Service.

He said the Cordillera has the second highest incidence of blindness in the country and this could be due to exposure to too much chemicals sprayed on the vegetables.

He said the sale of commercial farm inputs has become a "multi-billion [peso] industry" since farmers have become the "willing consumers."

Quoting figures from the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority, Chong said Benguet farmers alone spent P20 million for chemicals in 1993.

"This increased to P165 million in 1998 and as of 2005, they now spend P300,000 a month, from upscale farm inputs," he said.

He described multinational companies manufacturing the chemicals, saying "most of these prefer to make money than care for the health of farmers."

Chong said farmers will save up to P2 million a month if they would stop using too much chemicals.

The health of farmers is not the only one in danger but also the vegetables they produce are saturated and by excessive pesticide use in the farms, he said.

"The region is basically mountainous. Chemicals used in the uplands would go down to the major rivers and this could trigger a major environmental problem," he said.

The province produces more than 80 percent of Metro Manila's supply of vegetables. More than 200,000 farmers are engaged in agriculture in the province's vegetable belt.

Chong welcomed government efforts to encourage farmers to shift from conventional farming to organic farming.

TV reporter loses phone; finds it in shopping mall

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A TELEVISION REPORTER WHO LOST HER cell phone in a robbery in Pasig City last Saturday found it alive a few hours...in a shopping mall where it was being offered for sale.

But her story doesn't end there.

When she confronted the owner of the store, he offered her another cell phone, which she later found out was the same one that had been stolen from her co-worker.

Surprise, surprise

Theresa Andrada, a reporter for ABC-5, said the police that a robber took her cell phone, an EDA II PDA, in Pasig City early Saturday morning.

Where she went around the Carmelalli Shopping Center in San Juan to look for a replacement, Susan Jane, she was surprised to see her own phone—which she recognized through its serial number—displayed in one of the stalls.

Andrada confronted the stall owner who, in an effort to exchange her, offered her another cell phone of the same model as a lower price.

A check of the phone's serial number, however, showed that it was the same one a fellow ABC-5 reporter, Jessie Tuerro, had earlier lost to another robber.

Tonight for comment yesterday, Andrada refused to speak about the case, saying the incident was a "private matter."

The police, meanwhile, said the incident was "an isolated case" despite pressure to more of stolen phones rampantly being sold in the busy shopping area.

San Juan Police chief Supt. Rodolfo Jerome told the reporter that he said he may, in cooperation with mall executives, have Quezon implementing safety measures at the shopping center to prevent the sale of stolen goods.

Proof of ownership

"We have been talking the mall owners to ask for proof of ownership from people who sell mobile in their old phones," Jerome said.

But again, it is possible that robbers would be faking documents as well, victimizing unsuspecting mall owners, he added.

As of yesterday, Andrada had not yet filed a formal complaint against the mall owner.

A SHOEMAKER in Marikina City works cheerfully despite the problems that all the shoe business which once earned the city the title "Shoe Capital of the Philippines."

ROSS CAMOS

Shoemakers struggling to get back on feet

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SEARCHING FOR HOPE, SHOE CHOICE: A family of shoemakers in Marikina City is struggling to hold onto a local tradition, which has helped several generations, but is now selling.

His eyesight clear and his hands steady at age 66, Pepito is still into shoemaking.

Replacing the compound where he used to employ almost a hundred shoe makers these shoemakers age to a small storage room in Barangay Sto. Niño. With its rusty roof supported by a ceiling worn out by termites, this is where he and his two remaining workers, composed of his wife and sister, work.

The glorious days of this once bold business, delivering thousands of pairs of leather shoes to famous department stores every week, is now slowly fading from his memory, replaced by thoughts of what more saving, trying to make ends meet by selling synthetic shoes to small malls selling garments for persuasion from Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Pepito and his 36-year-old son Edgar, who also started his own shoemaking business when he got married, know the answers.

But they are powerless to do anything, aside from consoling by the early predictions they know, the job that made it possible for Pepito to send all of his four children to college.

"I will make shoes as long as I live. I will die in this profession," he said, speaking inside his cluttered, 30-square room full of unused rubber soles.

Edgar flew on Shoe Aeroflex, which residents used to call Daang Bakal. The narrow alley, which runs for about three kilometers, used to be the center of shoemaking in the city.

The street used to be lined with two-story houses on both sides, with shoemakers busy working on the lower floors.

"From afar, you would hear the sound of hammers and sewing machines. You could walk on this place with many cars closed and if you opened your eyes any time, you would most likely see people making shoes," shoemaker Joel Gandia, 40, also recalled.

Because of this 110-year-old tradition, Marikina City was dubbed the Shoe Capital of the Philippines.

Some, however, have canceled selling shoemaking in Marikina City a "sunset industry." Gandia, who recently stopped operating his 30-year-old shoemaking business, flatly declares it as a "dying industry."

Only a few backyard shops remain on the once famous alley. The rest have been replaced by tall concrete.

Pepito and Edgar, just like Gandia and their group Samahan ng Magsasapatos ng Pilipinas, are blaming the invasion of imported shoes, particularly those coming in from China.

"Before, people bore no hunger had enough time to sleep, especially during peak months, because we were all busy making shoes. We never were happy," Edgar said.

"Now, most of us have just waste our time sleeping. We have nothing to do," he added.

He himself had temporarily stopped making shoes for a logical reason: there were no orders.

"We are losing our buyers to cheaper imported goods," Gandia said, blaming the very low tariffs on imported shoes, an offshoot of the country's membership in the World Trade Organization.

Figures from his group say that imported shoes invading the local market swelled from around 20 million pairs in 1997 to 66 million pairs in 2002.

Because of the agreement, imported shoes became cheaper than locally produced shoes. Manufacturing shoes abroad and bringing them here became more profitable than putting up a factory and employing local shoemakers.

From the more than 2,000 registered shoe makers in the city in 1994, according to Gandia, only 207 remain, according to the City Business Permits and Licensing Office.

"We cannot match the prices of imported shoes, especially because prices of raw materials are also increasing," Edgar added.

For Gandia, it is the pain of seeing close friends of workers losing hope and their income that is keeping him and their group holding on.

"This is not just about shoemakers. The footwear industry is closely linked to several other industries," he explained.

The struggle will be long and difficult, they admit. But hopefully, they have made the first few steps—their Marikina-made shoes still in style on their feet.

Russian envoy's death still a mystery

By Terra V. Quimsundo

HOW A RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT drowned in a pool inside a Makati condominium building eight months ago remained unanswered yesterday as the police questioned three investigators into his death.

"We have to determine if there were any untoward incidents prior to the discovery of the body...that will lead us to conclude that it was not an accident," said Makati Police Department Homicide chief, Senior Insp. Gary Reyes.

At around 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, the body of Ivanjuc Mikerinoch Balayan, a 22-year-old personal officer, was found floating in a swimming pool inside the Makati Tuscany Condominium on Fonda Street, across Ayala Avenue in Makati City, where he had been living.

Balayan was rushed to the Makati Medical Center, but was declared dead on arrival at 7:45 p.m.

An autopsy conducted by the regional crime laboratory of the Southern Police District's Scene of the Crime Operations showed that Balayan died of drowning. Reyes said the autopsy yesterday.

The police, however, have yet to determine whether Balayan's postmortem tapes (swimming video) taken of the pool area," said Reyes.

Lim: Jaylo's case sets dangerous precedent

By Leila B. Salaverria and Jeremie Baking

SENATOR AND FORMER MMDA in-spokesman Alfredo Lim has expressed concern over the situation of his former colleagues, they said, who has become a scapegoat.

Jaylo, an ex-policeman and the former head of the defunct Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force (PARTF), has been ordered arrested in connection with the serious illegal detention charges filed against him because of his operations even after the dissolution of his agency.

The charges were filed after Jaylo and his men were accused of arresting alleged illegal recruiters without a mandate. They were also suspected of demanding money from their victims in exchange for their release.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has called on the former PARTF chief to turn himself in and face the charges against him.

"This is a dangerous precedent. If all the inmates execute an affidavit claiming that those who arrested them had (somewhere money), would the DOJ recognize this?" Lim said.

Meanwhile, the government will form a new body to replace the PARTF which will deal with other problems such as human trafficking, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) chief Rosalinda Baldoz said yesterday.

Baldoz told reporters she was just waiting for the DOJ to give the go-ahead for the creation of the task force, which would be composed of representatives from various government offices.

"We're just awaiting the recommendation from the DOJ regarding the composition of the new team, which we hope it will start operating early this year," she said.

Baldoz said she expected the new team, which would be under the POEA, to be more powerful and effective than the PARTF as it would have immigration and police officers as members.

No visits to the dentist for Roldan, says judge

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

NO SWEET SMILE FOR ACTOR and former Quezon City councilor Dennis Roldan this time.

The Pasig City Regional Trial Court yesterday denied a motion filed by Roldan's lawyer that he be allowed to visit his personal dentist "to obtain an unrushed."

The former actor-congressman has been accused of murdering the kidnapping of a 3-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy on February 2000. The boy was allegedly demanded in from P200 million in ransom at the start of the negotiations.

In his motion filed last month, Roldan asked the court to allow him to visit his personal dentist, who has a clinic in Timog Avenue, Quezon City.

Roldan is detained at the Pasig City jail along with his five co-accused.

But the prosecution opposed the motion, saying the request "was too much to ask" as the prisoner like him."

Finding merit in the prosecution's arguments, Judge Agnes Reyes-Carpio denied Roldan's motion yesterday.

"There being no showing that the reason doctor of the Pasig City Jail is best competent to attend to (Roldan's) dental problems or otherwise needed, there is no imperative necessity for him to visit his personal dentist," Carpio added in her order.

Paralyzed sides with MMDA

URLIE Bakal City, Paralyzed City town more kindly toward the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). Paralyzed Mayor Clarence Bunsoy told the Inquirer that he has asked the agency to consider its traffic management scheme in the city. It used to

ILLUSTRATION BY ROY VERGARA

near its onset as the city has hired and trained additional traffic enforcers, they will take over from the MMDA the management of traffic flow in major thoroughfares like the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Road, Quezon Road and the Skotan Interchange. For now, MMDA traffic enforcers would be allowed to apprehend and issue Traffic violation through to ering motorists in the city, Bernabe said.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Theft suspect arrested

THE MALABON City police have arrested a suspected member of a motorcycle theft gang operating in the city, in a report filed by PO2 Arsenio Bread, officer on duty, the police station at 4:40 last Saturday. P1 of Longos, Malabon City, was arrested at dawn yesterday along P. Sevilla Road, near the city's police headquarters. Bread, however, did not give additional details of the station's arrest to avoid tipping off other members of the syndicate. The suspect's arrest was carried out following information received from a confidential and based on information given by the gang's victims.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Teenagers rob teacher

A GRADE seven teenager got the shock of her life when she found herself being robbed by two boys on video that her own students the other night in Quezon City. Maricris Rabaya, 21, of Fabian, Quezon City, was walking on the pedestrian overpass on Commonwealth Avenue near Batasan Hills when she was stopped by two boys at 8:30 p.m. Monday, the police said. At knifepoint, the boys, both 13, asked for her cellphone, said SPO1 Melchor Bernaldo of the Batasan Hills police. When the victim handed over her phone, a Nokia 2310, the suspects fled, he added. Rabaya quickly informed the Batasan Hills police, who managed to catch the suspects minutes later. The police, however, was not recovered. The boys will be turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Vagrants rounded up

THE MMDA Police District (MPD) has ordered to relocate the crackdown on vagrants and street families as part of the "Sil For Santos, Pulis sa Makati, Syete sa Makati" program. "The presence of street families leads to higher crime rates in the city," MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said in a phone interview. Bulaong added that they have turned over seven children and families during at the district's Re-Manda Social Welfare Department "to ensure that they keep off the streets permanently." With its cleanliness and quick-response program, "M For Santos, Pulis sa Makati, Syete sa Makati," Bulaong hopes to reclaim some of the notable, while city number also

have one problem. It has type scammer where two that rob the same and gunfight incidents abound in areas surrounding the area that stations and arrests."

Bulaong said in an earlier interview

"We expect a decline or increase in the crime challenge of Mayor Jejomar Binay, who once called the area a crime-ridden hotbed with different robberies and gunfight crimes. The streets, he or she is now a Manila police station," Bulaong explained, adding that the observations resulted in the rationalization of the program. The police chief said that crackers and public safety officials officers may stop the protests because of the sense of security the police have provided. Bulaong's statement was echoed by Police Community Relations officer Supt. Lilia Pinto in regularly inspect the police stations and personnel.

Margaux C. Ortiz

No reservations

PET may throw signs in parking areas which say, "reserved for customers." A Quezon City councilor has reminded owners of establishments in the city that they cannot set aside parking spaces in the city. An ordinance passed last year declares that parking spaces in the city belong to the city government, and can thus be freely used by the public, according to Councilor Bernadette Herrera-Dy. Only owner 100% prohibits security guards from driving away individuals who have not patronized their establishments. Those are not customers, Herrera-Dy, however, clarified that the local executive officials cannot specifically name her parking spots as those for visits. She said valet parking spaces belong to the company and are considered private property.

Ed Pia

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Luis Teodoro G. Diyanqui

THE TUBA-TUBA PLANT Lovely to look at but dangerous to eat.

14 children hospitalized for eating 'tuba-tuba' seeds

By Tina G. Santos

FORTEEN CHILDREN IN TONDO, MANILA, were hospitalized on Monday after eating the seeds of the "tuba-tuba" (scientific name: *Jatropha curcas*) plant.

The victims, with ages ranging from 1 to 13 years old, were taken to the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Sta. Cruz, Manila, after complaining of vomiting and diarrhea.

Dr. Eduardo Serrano, head of the Preventative Diseases Division of the Manila City Health Office, said the children were in stable condition and were set to be discharged late night. Serrano said the children told him that they were walking around their neighborhood in Vitas, Tondo, at around 5 p.m. yesterday when one of them spotted the tuba-tuba plant with its green fruits.

One boy picked the fruits and ate the seeds, Serrano said. When he told his companions that the seeds were delicious, they followed his lead, he added. But after 30 minutes, Serrano said some of the children started vomiting while the others complained of dizziness. Alarmed, their parents brought them to the hospital.

Solidum warned other children not to eat the fruit of the tuba-tuba plant, which belongs to the *euphorbia* family.

According to health officials, the seeds of the plant contain substances that can affect the liver and muscular tissue. Just eating one seed can cause abdominal pains, dizziness and diarrhea.

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Win-bound Pacquiao unveiled

Filipino hero delights fans in open sparring ahead of Las Vegas journey

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—MANNY PACquiao's final workout here was opened to the public and what loomed was a skilled, vicious fighter who appeared only a knockout win shy of becoming a boxing masterpiece.

The crowding of Pacquiao, whose roaming counsel Jose Lorenzo asked to be excused from the ring, was restricted.

Trainer Freddie Roach had to give in to a sparring regimen in the morning, before a big crowd at the Wild Card gym, as they could move to Las Vegas in the afternoon.

Pacquiao was crisp in flight.

It was not exactly a new Manny Pacquiao who used spectators with [illegible] skills and techniques.

But the Pacquiao they saw was a far cry from the confused, overeager slugger who lost to Erik Morales in a bloody dramatic showdown last March.

Pacquiao yesterday was polished, strong, sure, if a little heavy.

He did a Muhammad Ali, sped [illegible] and danced as he spectators with bloody reminiscence of Roberto Duran.

Roach said Pacquiao now has power in both hands.

But the problem, he said, was that Pacquiao played to the big crowd.

"He wants to thrill," Roach said. "But you'll see him at his best on Saturday."

The transformation overwhelming.

Roach said Pacquiao will have to surpass himself in the rematch with Morales.

"Morales will surely bring in his best game, he's a tough guy, but we're ready for him," Roach said.

Pacquiao did not have to be told that yesterday's show was purely a rehearsal.

It for the greatest jackpot of his career, he has to be as good or be near yesterday inside the ring on Saturday.

Pacquiao is being paid $2 million to fight Morales again, but his expenses are mounting. He said he has already set aside $40,000 for tickets to be distributed to those who had placed early requests.

Add to that the growing list of those whom he had to provide plane tickets for, from friends to fans and both.

There's an ample way for Pacquiao to recoup his expenses, however.

That is, if Morales, who's being paid $1 million, decide to fix the fight over the US$1b limit.

As mandated by the Nevada State Boxing Commission, each extra pound would cost Morales $250,000 in penalty, which would then be given to Pacquiao.

More than that, it would mean that the taller Mexican, a three-time world champion, had to deprive himself of proper nutrition as fight day nears to make the weight limit.

According to Pacquiao, Morales at 29 years old would find it doubly hard to trim down to 130lbs.

LEANER but cheerful, Manny Pacquiao jumps in glee as he finishes his final workout Saturday at the Wild Card gym of trainer Freddie Roach in Los Angeles, California. Mats the elbow pad on Pacquiao's left arm.

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Pacquiao tries his luck in new Las Vegas venue

AP champ Diosdao Sultan wins it up with Cesar Yarte during their title fight at the Araneta Mall in Cubo City over the weekend.

By Norah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—Manny Pacquiao, frustrated in two previous bids at World Council bouts, tries to hit his career's biggest jackpot in a new arena on Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila).

Pacquiao took to his gray 99.5 million Pondos sparks cut with only Jackson and ally Sen "Bobo" Sabal to the glittering gambling capital where he was welcomed with hallooing and cheers by the Filipino staff of the fabulous Wynn's Las Vegas, built along the world-famous 'trip eight' mark in town.

Unlike in his past two major fights here, there was no giant billboard announcing Pacquiao's Jan. 21 rematch with Erik Morales along the special high-rear loading in the front of Las Vegas and its spellbinding cluster of hotel casinos.

PACQUIAO exchanges sharp punches with a sparmate.

But when he entered the hotel lobby, Pacquiao was told what his promoter was all about.

"The first batch was an epic, an ironical the framed miniature scene at the lobby of Wynn's, a 3,700-room wonder that boasts a golf course in its vast compound.

Morales arrives in this gambling mecca Sunday in a private jet in time for the press conference on Wednesday.

The weigh-in is scheduled for day and Morales could be required to check in pale and sore after struggling with his arch-nemesis.

Pacquiao is supposed to hammer through the scales.

However, the Pinoy idol, who cleaned up with a rapid forearm for his final sparring session, will have to do something drastic, short of carving the super, in order to free himself of the technical harness as he entered by Morales inside the fight ring.

Morales can be expected to shape up for the fight fully recharged after reporting like a rubberchild for the weigh-in in the first encounter.

Sultan retained his title with 1:26 left in the seventh in the bout promoted by Sammy Gello-ani.

In the other bouts, Robert "Chill Hunter" Alfonso scored knockdowns in the unanimous fourth en route to a unanimous decision win over a tough Hissey Orvillena.

In the other bouts, Dennis Flores scored a top-ruled hunting on Noel Naranjan, 69-64 in all three judges; Ray Cabrera TKOs 26 Jamora at the 1:13 mark of the 2nd round; 63 Israel also TKOs Rudel Tesoraga at 2:56 of the 5th; Sharmin Baro decisioned Nini Rodriguez, Pedro Wilson KOs Gaday Pasanero at 2:40 of the 2nd round; Rogen Flores TKOs Jr. Badaso 2:09 of the 2nd round; artist Noel Songalot KOs Joe Mabalo at 1:11 of the second round. Salvan

L.Legandoy Contributor

Sultan retains RP title; Catubay wins

CEBU CITY—RP WELTERWEIGHT boss Diosdao "Supreme" Sultan impressively retained his national title after he bested challenger Cesar Yarte on the seventh round of their bout on Saturday night at the Gaisano Country mall parking area.

Sultan launched our challenger Cesar Yarte in 1:26 of the seventh round to retain its reign. Ist welterweight title, while Federico "Magnifico" Catubay captured the Flyweight crown with a close but unanimous decision victory over Lenie Restigan in a pair of thrilling matches pursued by Ogie Jr cooperation with Jonah Television, This Sports, Dalton, Air Philippines, dzRH, dzSR, Sun Star and the assorted Group of Publications.

NCRAA caging: Lightnings sink PMI Admirals

ASIAN COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ripped Philippine Maritime Institute, 112-109, yesterday in the 13th National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament at the UAC Sports Center.

Ace Agapito caused two free throws with 11 seconds left as the Lightnings rebounded from the 62-65 loss they suffered at the hands of the Arellano University Running Arrows last Friday.

In the second game, Jeffery Antonanzas sank two free throws with eight seconds left to power PCU past ARIA Computer College, 71-68.

Leo Cural, a prized recruit from Dumaguete City, shot a game-high 26 points for the Lightnings, who took a 51-32 operation halftime

January bad for RP boxers

IN HUDDLE

Bert Cielo

THE MAJORITY OF Filipinos are upbeat about Manny Pacquiao's chances against Erik Morales despite being the 13-9 underdog in oddmakers' books as their Jan. 22 rematch at the Thomas and Mack Center in Las Vegas.

One boxing expert, however, says the Pinoy feels that if Morales has had difficulty achieving the required weight, "he won't be at a hundred percent going into the fight and will be knocked out within six rounds. On the other hand, Manny is focused and well-prepared."

Another factor going against Morales, according to the expert, is that he trained in a new environment in new trainers.

"The changes might not serve him well. Morales can't get any better than how he fought in the first fight, but Manny can do much, much more," said the expert.

* * *

For Peter Claudinog, chief operating officer of Solar Entertainment Corp., which will air the fight here in the Philippines, the bout will be tightly fought from start to finish.

By "finish," Peter means the ninth round when he sees Manny winning by technical decision.

"I predict it is going to be a very close fight," said Peter, who flies to Las Vegas this Friday to witness the rematch live.

The fight will be shown live at the ungodly hour of 5AM Department Store (Mega Mall, Megamall, Cubao, Greenhills, Fairview and South Mall), said Buckwell.

According to Jude Turcasio, Solar VP for marketing, SM will sell tickets at P500 pre, and Buckwell at P300 pre.

Airing starts at 5 a.m., Jude said, for the undercards and a head that features Filipino divers down.

Indeed, everything looked hunky-dory for the pinoys until hearing researcher Teddy Sayoson came up with this dampening flood on his research, "Teddy said January is not a good month for Pinoy boxers, especially if the match is held abroad.

"Of the five world title fights involving Pinoys held in January, all but one lost on foreign turf. December is a more favorable month, with 7 out of 8 Pinoys winning world title fights, among them Pacquiao, Lamboy Sapiansay, Pedro Salgueo, Pedro Salvador Jr. and Dodie Boy Penalosa," Teddy reported.

* * *

Getting hold of a confidential report that says PBA commissioner Noli Eala had invited basketball stakeholders and MAP president Jerry Lim to a meeting, I immediately texted Noli to find out what was cooking.

To our relief, Noli said the report was only half true. Not all the stakeholders were invited. The meeting was only among Lim, PBA commissioner Chito Narvasa and himself.

And what did they talk about?

"We're still discussing the system and studying the procedures," was all Noli would say. Later it that these discussions will be a continuing activity since Noli said he expects the group to come up with something more concrete by next week.

* * *

A toast to the PBA's man-of-the-hour Ilo Pennel, head coach of giant killer NLEX whose name I can now spell correctly.

Flowing beaten the strongest PBA teams this conference, Ilo won the team topic of conversation in last Saturday's twice-hour "Usapang Sports" program over Radio dyMO.

Studio guests and callers said Ilo has proven that his battlecry "Solid all 11 players" philosophy, which other coaches find unworkable, can be implemented with good results.

They also said that the Express' reversal of fortunes can be attributed to a much stronger lineup this season, and the vast improvement of new acquisition Sunny de Ocampo, thanks to a basketball scholarship to Florida, compliments of his former team Talk N' Text.

Real, of course, they said that's the dynamic and 'presolded crunching stuff' head-ed by PBA rookie Ilo to give credit to.

* * *

Ilo admitted there were times when he fielded at less than 12 players, as observed by scribes covering the PBA.

"But there were times when a player was either injured, sick or suspended," he explained.

He said the most thought that his team was able to squabble the notes versus Talk N' Text—and before that, eliminate San Miguel Beer—makes him feel great.

HARBOUR Centre's Antiwar helps it seal a big quarterfinal edge.

Portmasters defang tough Teethmasters

By Jasmine W. Payo

LA TENORIO STARTED OUT STRONG, WHILE JOSEPH Yeo and Rob Reyes finished hot for Harbour Centre as the Portmasters ripped the Hapee-PCU Teethmasters, 69-63, to clinch the twice-to-beat quarterfinal edge in the PBL Heroes Cup yesterday at the San Andres Gym.

"We've just one win away from the semis," said coach Jorge Gallent as his Portmasters shoot for a semifinal slot against the Teethmasters in their quarterfinal match tomorrow. "We just played tough defense down the stretch, especially against their shooters."

GAME'S SUMMARY

[Jan Antiwar Gym]

7 p.m.—Montalbo vs. Quincy Davis

4 p.m.—Pagsa (OC) vs. Batman Cuntin

The Portmasters also got an unexpected boost from reserve guard Jo-

with nine points, six rebounds, six assists and three steals.

Finding his range in the second half, Yeo finished with 12 points, while Reyes collected a team-high 13 points, 10 rebounds and two blocks.

Trailing by 10 at halftime, Coaching where the Teethmasters bounced back in the fourth period.

Granny Green, also armed with the twice-to-beat bonus, will battle Montalbo in the other quarterfinal pairing.

Bulo or Rizal and Magnolia for Cavans have already advanced to the semifinals, the top-seeded giants to run-ning with the best records at the end of the eliminations round.

The scores:

HARBOUR CENTRE 69—Reyes 13, Yeo 12, Cruding 10, Tenorio 9, Palattao 7, Espinosa 5, Arellano 4, Sagandoi 4, Reyes 2, Gatt 2, Lontoc 0, De Jr. 0

HAPEE-PCU 63—Ephraim 17, Jara 9, Gonzales 9, Ildo 8, Moreno 7, Felipe 7, Castro 4, Pastor 4, Alba 4, Gerard, Cardeo

Quarters: 32-44, 36-52, 53-61, 69-63

Barako seek sweep; TNT, Air21 break tie

SURGING RED BULL AIMS TO SWEEP UFTI quarterfinal duel with Alaska today in the Sun Oling Coffee Philippine Basketball Association PA ores Conference at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Going for a sweep on the strength of their 2-1 lead in the race-to-three series, the Barako are seeking to forge a first-of-seven clash with crowd favorite Bonnaga Gindro in the semifinals.

"It's hard to predict a sweep because [in our Game 3 it is going to be seasonal battle," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, following the Barako's 95-73 massacre of the Aces in Game 3 last Sunday. "But we still look really hard if we don't sweep it up."

GAME'S TODAY

[Cuneta Astrodome]

4:45 p.m.—Alaska vs. Red Bull Barako

7:30 p.m.—Talk 'N Text vs. Air21, 1-1, 4th Sun Bull d. Alaska, 100-92; Game 2—Talk 'N Text d. Air21, 111-103; Game 3—Air21 d. Talk 'N Text, 80-67; Red Bull d. Alaska, 95-73

In the other quarterfinal pairing, the Air21 Express have the momentum against the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals after squaring the series, 1-1, with a 99-87 win in Game 2, the last Sunday.

The Phone Pals will parade Chevrie Kaw, rookie 7-NBA journeyman, as replacement for Jasmine Canon-Ilo their bid for a semifinal seat opposite the Purefoods Chunkee Giants.

The 32-year-old Kaw, a 2003 Rookie-of-the-Year selection at least six times in the NBA, including the 2004 world champions Detroit Pistons.

Called with springs on both legs, Chevy was known for his rebounding in the Milwaukee Bucks, Washington Wizards and the Atlanta Hawks. He was drafted in the third round out of Nebraska-Omaha.

"I guess we just have to find a way against those rebounders," said Air21 coach Ilo Pennel, referring to Talk 'N Text's three-guard and front-line heavy rotations. "It's all about adjustments."

Coincidentally, Jasmine Phone Pals' boss nothing but praise for Kaw, who is expected to make his debut in the conference this Sunday. "I'm very convinced now that Chevy is the right import for us," said Guiao. "He's been a real servant ... and it's rubbing off on the locals."

Jane Meneses

PHILIPPINE RACING POST

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Morales
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PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1 Computer Magazine in the Philippines

Siemens' RP unit opens 450-seat contact center

By Rusmel W. Domingo

THE LOCAL UNIT OF SIEMENS AG OF GERMANY YESTERday launched its P250-million call center at the Eastwood City Cyberpark in Quezon City.

Siemens Information and Communication Networks (Siemens ICN) president and chief executive, said during the launching rites that the company decided to put up a 450-seat call center to the country's continued its operations in Asia.

"The Philippines is the capital of the call center industry in the world, and we believe it has the strongest potential for growth," Siemensen said.

The call center is expected to double the number of seats—with the workforce reaching over 1,000—within the year once the operation goes into full swing, he added.

Christian Ginsberg, Siemens president for global outsourcing, explained that the call center unit was one of the group's bigger call centers worldwide

Shares close 0.77% higher

HK group wants EIB among top 10 RP banks

By Gerk C. Dantes

THE LIPPO GROUP of Hong Kong is keen on opening its local banking venture Equitable PCI Bank (EIB) into a major player and has hired an ex-Hong Kong Monetary Authority official to lead its Philippine operations.

In an interview with the Inquirer yesterday, former HK Monetary Authority Executive Director Albert Chenk said he would come from his current post as chair of Bangkok Bank Berhad to focus on EIB, where the Lippo group has become the single biggest stockholder with 40 percent interest.

The Lippo group over the long haul expects EIB to become one of among the country's top 10 banks.

Chenk, who also used to be a bank official in Australia, will sit as deputy chair to EIB as part of a comprehensive restructuring program.

"The stage is now clear for EIB to move forward to become a major league player in the local banking industry," Chenk said.

EIB obtained a P5-billion fresh capital infusion from the Lippo group and select investors and forged an agreement with the state-controlled Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. to unload P10-billion worth of bad assets which EIB inherited from the defunct Urban Bank group.

EIB, with total resources of about P58 billion, currently ranks among the country's top 20 banks.

The PDIC will purchase the bad assets

WHAT'S INSIDE

Sy's other targets

25 pro-need firms get licenses

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PLDT to bring mobile services to US, Middle East

Telecommunications giant to expand services in nations with thriving Filipino communities

By Cielrae S. Bacino

AS SOON AS IT LAUNCHES ITS REBEL phone services in Singapore in March this year, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. will bring its mobile services to other overseas markets with large Filipino communities.

PLDT Global Affords Ventillo said in an interview that the next destinations for its mobile network operations would include North America, the Middle East and Europe.

"This year, our plan is to follow where our countrymen are," said Ventillo.

The app-rule foreign countries would allow PLDT and its unit, Smart Communications Inc., to offer mobile services to Filipinos abroad, including remittances through text, text messaging and voice calls.

There are at least eight million Filipinos working overseas who send a combined $12 billion in their relatives in the Philippines each year.

Of the three target markets, the United States and Canada, which essentially some prior North America, have the biggest Filipino communities.

There are more than 3.3 million Filipinos in North America, of which close to 3 million are in the US.

In the Middle East, there are more than 1.5 million and almost a million in Europe, mostly in Italy and in United Kingdom.

Ventillo said PLDT's global would also like to expand its present locations, which so far had been focused on Hong Kong and Singapore.

"We are confident that our mobile services in Singapore, with the value of the PLDT and Smart brands and the uniquely Filipino features, will be a perfect fit for our OFWs," Ventillo said.

PLDT will offer three prepaid services in Singapore among the facilities of MobileOne or M1, the third largest carrier there.

In September 2004, PLDT launched its first virtual mobile services in Hong Kong called 1168 Smart in partnership with CSL.

"This partnership will enable M1 to serve a very specific segment of mobile customers by leveraging on the unique competitive advantage that PLDT and Smart enjoy within the Filipino community," said M1 chief executive officer Syed Mahboob in a statement.

There are 180,000 Filipinos in Singapore and almost 200,000 in Hong Kong.

With 1168 Smart, Filipinos in Hong Kong are able to call their family in the Philippines for only 58/88 cents a minute as opposed to 80/88 cents to 1.98/1.98 through other carriers, explained Ventillo.

PLDT Global is generating between 18/12 and 19/13 million a month in revenue.

Philam Plans restates commitment to planholders

Amidst the growing public concern on the pre-need industry fueled by news reports on selling pre-need companies, Philam Plans President and CEO Jesus G. Ibañez issued to its planholders a letter of reassurance stating that "Philam Plans will meet all the contractual obligations represented in the pre-need plans that it has issued and continues to sell. The well-timed letter was appreciated by the company's 300,000 planholders who in 2005 received P464M worth of cash benefits from their maturing plans.

It should be noted that Philam Plans went against the norm in 1988 when it offered only fixed value plans. Today this model proved to be the only sustainable plan in the business putting Philam Plans in a unique position as one of the few pre-need companies that does not carry the financial burden of open-ended education plans. With fixed value plans, Philam Plans is able to determine all to future planholder obligations and consistently provide for benefits as it falls due.

Backing up the words of assurance is the company's trust fund, which continues to enjoy the highest level in the industry today. As of November 2005, Philam Plans' trust fund stood more than P19B, with over 90% secured in cash or near cash equivalent such as government securities. With very liquid and more than adequate trust funds set aside for planholder obligations, Philam Plans can pay all benefits due today and up to 2013. This trust fund has been growing at an average of 40% in the past two years aligned with growing PH obligations of the company.

The earnest desire to stay committed to the people made Philam Plans the leading pre-need company in the country today. This is reflected in the recent report of the Actuarial Advisors, Inc. dated September 2005. The watch group reported Philam Plans to have once again taken the overall lead in pre-need sales at P3.760B PNP and 25.55% market share.

Pre-need buyers have every reason to feel secured in Philam Plans, which recently infused P500M to its paid-up capitalization to further boost its capability to provide products and services that the market requires. Philam Plans now enjoys the status of having the highest paid-up capital with P700M, or seven times over the SEC minimum requirement for a pre-need company. Its continued compliance with the standards and guidelines set by the SEC paved the way for the renewal of its license and approval of its request to sell additional pre-need securities amounting to P6.5B.

Philam Plans is affiliated with Philamlife, the leading insurance company in the country and AIG, the worlds leading international insurance and financial services organization in the world. The financial might of these leading companies is ready to support Philam Plans.

"All these establish our earnestness to preserve and excel in providing essential pre-need financial planning services to you and to the Filipino community," Ibañez assures the public.

to Philam Plans, powering in.

Coconut oil exporters expect more sales from China

By Bernel W. Domingo

LOCAL COCONUT OIL EXPORTERS ARE anticipating more foreign exchange earnings from China's decision to cut the 10-percent tariff on fish products had been scrapped when the Philippines-China Early Harvest Program became effective Jan. 1.

The EHP is a preliminary arrangement between China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in preparation for free trade by 2010.

According to the Inland Coconut Association of the Philippines, the EHP leveled the field for local coconut oil exports against competitors from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Lisap executive director Vernor Ignacio said in an interview that Indonesian exporters to China used to have the advantage since they paid Chinese customs a tariff of only 5 percent or only half of what Filipino exporters paid.

"The United States and Europe are our biggest market for coconut oil exports," Ignacio said. "But the expansion of our market share in China would be very welcome since this would diversify our dependence on our traditional markets."

Lisap data show that China imports some 20,000 metric tons of coconut oil a year, of which shipments from the Philippines represent 10 percent.

Jesus L. Arranza, president of the Coconut Oil Refiners Association, said in a separate interview that his group was confident that local exports could match those from Indonesia in terms of volume.

"As far as available supply for exports is concerned, the Philippines has the biggest coconut lands," Arranza said. "Aside from that, China's demand for any commodity has been growing significantly in the past several years."

In April 2005, the government agreed to enter the EHP with China through a framework agreement on an Asean-China Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, which paves the way for the realization of an Asean-China Free Trade Area by 2010.

The EHP gives both countries an advance low tariff entry before the free trade agreement takes effect, on condition that Asean markets open up to Chinese products.

Taking effect last Jan. 1, the Philippine-China EHP covers 209 tariff lines that include plant, animal and marine products.

The tariff lists the following specific products refined but not chemically modified copra, palm kernel or babassu oil; crude oil and refined oil of soybean, cocoa powder, with and without added sugar or other sweetening matter; and cane, cane, bamboo or similar material.

The Philippines is the last of the 10 Asean members to enter China's EHP.

The others have done so as early as 2003 and have cut tariffs on covered products to between 2 percent and 5% percent and agreed to remove those tariffs in 2006.

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DOF supports transfer of pre-need firms to IC

By Michelle V. Ratia

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE WILL SUPport moves to transfer the supervision of the embattled pre-need industry from the Insurance and Exchange Commission to the Insurance Commission.

The DOF said it would help lobby for the passage of the pending bills to reform the industry, saying pre-need reforms were part of its legislative agenda for the year.

"Transferee of pre-need is actuarial in nature. The pre-need industry is better off with in the mandate of the IC," Finance Undersecretary Romeo Tan told reporters yesterday.

The proposal to transfer the supervision of pre-need firms to the IC was revived last year when key industry players College Assurance Plan (CAP) and Pacific Plan Inc. (PPI) suffered from financial difficulties that led to the suspension of millions payments to its plan holders.

The DOF said in an earlier position paper that the pre-need sector was better off under the IC, which has an active oversight.

Tan said the IC was prepared to take over the regulation of pre-need firms, although it still needed to tailor fit its services, which were designed to cover insurance firms, to cater to the needs of pre-need companies.

Aside from transferring supervision of the pre-need industry, lawmakers pushing a pre-need code to regulate pre-need firms would also be supported by the DOF.

"Considering that this is a multibillion-peso industry and composed of large number of companies, the need for a legislative framework becomes imperative in order to set the standards, safeguards, rules on investments, solvency, and the overall operations of the industry," the DOF said in the position paper.

Emilio Imbassy Commissioner Evangelina Encarnacion said the IC was prepared to take over the supervision of pre-need firms anytime Congress decides to pass any of the pending bills on pre-need reforms.

Siemens' RP unit . . .

Pretzagne 81

recorded in 2004, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

By comparison, there were 3 million nurses in US-based call centers and over 200,000 in India in 2004.

Earlier this month, the US-based think tank Milken Institute released a Pseudo-Asia-Philippines and that the fast growing business process outsourcing and call center sector was in danger of losing some because the supply of qualified workers was drying up.

According to the JPEP-P, less than three out of every 100 fresh college graduates are hired in the BPO/IT industry yearly.

A JPEP-P study showed that the declining supply of qualified workers to the sector would retard the growth of the $16 billion industry.

The group said a solution was to adequately prepare fresh graduates for such jobs. BPO/IT companies is providing their quality training, especially in arresting the declining proficiency of graduates in the English language. **With a report from AP**

and would serve Siemen's global customers.

Declaring said Siemen's Philippine call center was the latest addition to the existing satellite call service offices of Siemens in the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Canada, Turkey and Singapore.

Siemens AG vice president Heinrich Lampman said the company was "extremely satisfied" with the quality of available workers here and that it has as far hired 340 employees.

"The local employees are considered US plus, meaning, they are comparable with US customers," Lampman said.

He also said Siemens was looking at other locations in the country for future expansion.

Outsourcing is the fastest growing industry in the Philippines, with government officials and industry players forecasting sales to grow to $13.41 billion by 2010 from $2.46 billion last year.

By February, the Philippines will have 138 call center companies. The number of seats last year rose to 75,000 from the 40,000

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Miss sweeper

TUE HUNDLOC Australians in Lafayette cop over and grabs senior have gone up management control of the Rupa-Rupa operations in favor of Carlos Dominguez Jr., the deputize ers secretary of agriculture and also of the environment and natural resources.

Dominguez led a group of international investors in boldly acquiring a 1.6-percent stake in the Bank since parent company to exchange for being named chair, CEO and president of the Philippine mining corporation.

Rupa-Rupa is the first mining venture of the listed means company, who in a year earned what could have been a quiet management off the coast of Albay into an overcommercial disaster.

Hopefully with Dominguez at the helm, the Filipinos could explorer the rehabilitation and environmental record at Pasar, the copper smelter that Dominguez also helped turned around.

Dominguez's marching order—to clean up the mining spill and placate the Bicolanos.

Heard through the grapevine

WEDDING BS Boy Sing, taking on the success of his Dominguez North Luzon Expressway depot, avoid the outlet of taking over seven electrified valley Underlie-users.

(Email: cadiolo.pdi@pbd.net or cadiolo_pdi@yahoo.com)

HK group

- - - Turn page B6

at a discount of 78 percent, swelled paying P3 billion for the P 10 billion in bad assets.

At the same time, it has agreed to provide income support to cover the discount from the sale of the assets by way of a P7 billion soft loan for 18 years, which will be fully secured by government securities.

Aside from the 10-billion cost expired to be inflated by the Lipps group and other investors, the PDIC will also subscribe to a P2 billion tier 2 capital in the form of investor bearing subordinated debt, which will be payable to the deposit insurer in 10 years.

"This marks a fresh chapter in EBT operations," Chook said. "This package is a perfect example of how the banking authorities and major shareholders of a bank had put their minds together to address a banking issue in practice the court losing subsidy and efficient of the banking system in a win-win formula."

After this restructuring program, Chook said EB would remain as "healthy, lean and flexible universal" financial institution that could in the future be counted among the Philippines top 10 banks.

The bank got a fresh capital infusion from major stockholders led by the Lipps group and the local Sia group, together with Ekm Investment Co. Ltd., the designated investment vehicle of the RZB group of Austria and AIG Capital Partners Ltd. of Hong Kong.

The Lipps and Sia groups, who are existing stockholders in EB, now have a 60-percent combined stake in EB, while RZB and AIG Capital, which are new investors, now own a combined 30 percent.

The Philippine Bankers Confederation, which co-handled EB with the Lipps group prior to the 1997 financial crisis, has sent its stake diluted to less than 10 percent.

Chook said EB, which now operates a network of about 54 branches, would focus on organic growth first following its major restructuring.

He added that the Lipps group had invested in the bank for the long haul, and would support its expansion.

The restructuring puts the bank on firmer financial footing.

JFC buys out partner in Greenwich

Building up cash reserves to finance expansion strategy

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FAST FOOD GIANT Jollibee Foods Corp. said it had fully acquired Greenwich Pizza Corp. by buying out its partner in the quick-service pizza and pasta chain for P394 million.

In a statement sent to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Jollibee chair Tony Tan Caktiong said the move was in line with the group's strategy to acquire businesses or additional stakes in existing businesses for consolidation into its operations.

Jollibee bought the 20-percent stake of Green Foods Franchising Inc., raising the group's holdings in the fast food pizza chain to 100 percent.

"We have been very pleased with our partnership with Green Foods Franchising Inc. over the past 11 years, starting in 1994 when JFC acquired 80 percent of Greenwich Pizza Corp. This buyout, which was arrived at in terms satisfactory to both our partner and to JFC, will add sales and profit to and will facilitate in simplifying our operations," Tan Caktiong said in the statement.

In its financial report as of September, Jollibee said Greenwich's system-wide sales—a measure of all sales to consumers from both company-owned and franchised stores—grew 4.3 percent in the third quarter ending September. No figures were specified.

Jollibee chief finance officer Tessel Bayot said Greenwich's total sales of P3.5 billion in 2005 contributed 10 percent to Jollibee's total system-wide sales for that year.

Also, Greenwich generated P2.7 billion in revenue and P331.9 million in net income in 2004.

As of Dec. 31, Greenwich runs a total of 239 stores, of which 128 are company-owned and 111 are under franchise agreements.

Tan Caktiong also said he was confident about the long-term prospect of the Greenwich brand.

"We have built a leading brand over these years. We are confident that this brand will continue to grow robustly in the future."

Shares also said Jollibee yesterday paid Green Foods in cash.

Jollibee has been accumulating cash reserves for its expansion strategy.

Last October, Jollibee acquired full control of Red Ribbon Bakeshop for P1.8 billion.

In March 2004, it bought 85 percent of Chowking fast food Ningbo King for P11.3 million.

The Jollibee Group, the largest fast food chain in the country, operates a total of 1,420 stores in the country and in nine overseas overseas.

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Toral

The composite index was up 16.54 points at 2,154.50, after trading between 2,130.80 and 2,155.22. Volume turnover stood at 1.34 billion shares worth P468.1 million (Efe/Reuters).

The broader all-shares index advanced 10.88 points to 1,919.04.

Gainers outnumbered losers, 52 to 38, while 40 stocks ended unchanged.

The peso averaged at 53.613 to the US dollar in mid-day trade.

Bulk of the Philippine blands led the losers, ending P3.50 higher at P58.50. Port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. rose P1.20 to P113.50 on speculative interest.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. ended up at P1,650, while rival Globe Telecom advanced P5.50 to close at P795.

Oil refiner Petron Corp gained 15 centavos to P5, in a recovery driven by rising oil prices.

Ayala Corp. rose P3.50 to P327.50, while unit Ayala Land Inc. was steady at P9.35.

6 shares of Manila Electric Co., limited to foreign investors, traded steady at P7.4 while 8 shares ended unchanged at P25.25.

San Miguel Corp. B shares were steady at P64, while San Miguel B shares retreated by 50 centavos to P67.50. AFP

20-yr T-bond rate drops

By Michelle U. Rocha

THE BAID ON THE 20-YEAR TREASURY bond fell by almost 2 percentage points to only 10.25 percent yesterday, due largely to high market liquidity.

The rate was 107.3 basis points lower than the 11.325 percent recorded in the auction last October.

"The market is now highly predictable given the obvious excess liquidity and their preference for short-term [as the government's fiscal situation]," said National Treasurer Omar Cruz in a press briefing after yesterday's auction.

Appetite for the long-term government security was strong, with tenders reaching P7.124 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only P4 billion.

Cruz said the liquidity in the market was boosted by the P12.4 billion worth of maturing Treasury bills and bonds this week that are expected to be reinvested in government securities.

The government accepted P4 billion worth of bids, raising in full its scheduled borrowing yesterday.

Cruz said the decline in interest rates was expected as banks remained awash with cash and as the government reduced its borrowing requirements, resulting in the possible net re-issuance of government securities.

The treasurer said he was set to announce today details of the planned infrastructure in the government's domestic borrowing program.

25 pre-need firms get licenses

By Elizabeth C. Sarabia

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMission has granted 24 pre-need firms licenses to sell securities this year.

These firms are Ayala Plans Inc., Bobby Investment Plans Inc., CityPlans Inc., Classic Plans Inc., Colegio Pilipino Inc., Fine Gesture Plans Inc., Hongkong Philippine Plans Inc., Mind Venture Plans Corp., Monolith Financial Plans, Mercantile Corporate Plans, Millenium Plans, Inc., Memorial Services Inc., Pentacost Plans Inc., Pilipas Plans, Primerila Plans, Primeplan International Corp., Primetech Plans International Corp., Prudentialife Plans Inc., Sun Life Financial Plans Inc., Transcorp Plans Inc., St. Peter Life Plan Inc., United Plans, UCPlans Inc., Comprehensive and Excellent Plans.

The list is contained in an SEC memo report on new issued licenses as of Jan. 4.

Four other applications for licenses are still being processed.

Estanza said the SEC would grant licenses to all who had completed their requirements "without prejudice to penalties for violations already committed."

In a separate development, the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies Inc. (PFPPCI) is asking the SEC for more time to adopt international accounting standards (IAS) which are to be imposed starting this year.

PFPPCI president Miguel Vinzons said the group was asking for another six months from April, when they are required to book premiums from collections as liabilities based on IAS.

SEC Chair Mr Batin said the regulator was open to giving pre-need firms more time but suggested that they start adopting their financial reports based on these standards as pre-need is a "dying" business.

Vinzons said the increase in liabilities based on the treatment of premium collections might have an adverse impact on retained earnings.

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SGV, RCBC sever ties

AUDITING FIRM SGV & CO. AND Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. have agreed to terminate their auditor-client relationship on account of their dispute over the 1997, 1998 and 1999 audits of Bankard Inc. Bankard is an accredited subsidiary of RCBC Capital Corp. which, in turn, is a related party (second subsidiary of the bank). RCBC Capital acquired Bankard from Equitable PCIBank in May 2004.

Those audits relate to Bankard's accounting policies and practices on income recognition, provision for doubtful accounts, and financial statement disclosures, which RCBC Capital claimed to be non-compliant with generally accepted accounting principles. SGV denied the allegations.

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Gov't urged to issue guidelines on ethanol importation this month

By Abigail L. Ho

FACED WITH A SHARED DEPLETED ETHANOL supply and the possible ousting of its ethanol blended gasoline program, Isnad Petroleum Corp. is urging the government to finalize the guidelines governing ethanol importation before the end of the month.

Isnad president Gloria Si said the government, led by the Department of Energy, should now issue the ethanol importation guidelines so it could prepare for its next shipment and prevent the suspension of the company's gasoline blending program.

Based on current demand, he said Isnad's is currently ethanol supply could be stretched up to the end of March. "After that, we won't be able to address demand anymore."

However, it would be best to have the importation guidelines ready before the end of this month so the oil firm could start making arrangements with its suppliers.

"Before we can make arrangements with our suppliers, we need to have the guidelines so our supplier can comply with whatever technical specifications there are," he told the business.

He said Isnad had written Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla informing him of the need for the guidelines and of the company's shortage of ethanol supply.

Up to now, however, the oil firm has not received any response and the guidelines has yet to be issued, he said.

"We're really just waiting for the Department of Energy] as to how they'd want us to proceed. After the first shipment, there were feedback for customs [concerning] agreements calling for a clearer set of guidelines.

They said the guidelines should include feedback from the Department of Finance, Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs," he said.

To participate in the country's bio-ethanol fuel program, President Macapagal-Arroyo on July 22 issued EO 449, reducing the tariff on bio-ethanol imports from 10 percent to only 1 percent.

Covered by the tariff reduction are bio-ethanol to be used in the government's fuel Blended Program.

FirstGen profit hits ₱3.65B

FIRST GEN CORP., the power generation unit of the Lopez Group, said its consolidated net income increased by 1.4 percent in the first nine months ending September 2005 to P3.65 billion from P3.7 billion in the same period in 2004.

Core-unit operating revenues grew 29.4 percent to P26 billion during the period from P20.1 billion in 2004 due to the spike in power plant operation and maintenance costs. This was contained in First Gen's consolidated statement submitted to a prospectus addressed to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Power plant operation and maintenance expenses had hosted 27.9 percent to P22.4 billion due to higher average dispatch rates for its power plants in Batangas and San Lorenzo in Batangas City.

Fuel expenses for its Sta. Rita power plant swelled by 30 percent to P15.6 billion as of the nine month period due to higher demand from affiliate power distributor Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

Fuel expenses for its San Lorenzo plants increased in the first nine months to P6.8 billion from P6.6 billion due to higher average gas prices.

Revenues in the nine-month period surged 16.1 percent to P33.75 billion in the first nine months from P28.1 billion in the previous year.

First Gen is holding its initial public offering on Feb. 15.

It has set its offer price at between P5.1 and P6.2 a share.

First Gen hopes to raise P12.3 billion through the sale of 1.63 billion to 2.19.9 billion new shares.

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Editor Cesar G. Mangosong

BIR: Effect of VAT cap on buyers depends on assemblers, dealers

By Noach K. Salazar

(Concluded)

LAST WEEK, CAMPI (Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc.) announced that the 70 percent VAT cap provision was "anti growth," adding that "the low cap would definitely cause difficulties among assemblers and dealers nationwide."

Campi also said that for car assemblers faced with unstable or decreasing sales volumes, the quarterly output tax would especially be lower than the cumulative input tax due to inventories, especially during times that new products.

The output tax is the tax on the sales of the company. The input tax is tax based on the purchases of the company, and on sales or costs of conducting businesses. Subtracting the input tax from the output tax would be the VAT payable by the company.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue, as the implementer of tax laws, explains the 70 percent VAT cap provision.

In a situation where the input is greater than the output, Assistant Commissioner, member of the BIR VAT review committee, presents a specific example:

Suppose a car dealer buys 16 cars from the assembler worth P11 million including VAT. Input tax would be P1 million, or 10 percent of P10 million) and then sells only two cars in the same month.

"Assuming that P3M,000 is the output tax for the two units sold. With the new 70 percent VAT cap provision, the car dealer is only entitled to deduct 70 percent from the output tax. Seventy percent of P300,000 is P210,000.

"This means the car dealer has to pay the BIR P90,000 more."

In the meantime, the car dealer deducts the P110,000 from P1 million, which still leaves a difference of P790,000. "The car dealer would be able to use that amount as deduction or as credit later, next month, when he would be able to sell more cars," said Arpo.

Still applicable

Assuming the car dealer didn't purchase more cars from the manufacturer the following month since the dealership still has eight units to sell, and then eventually sells four units more with an output tax of P150,000 each car unit (for a total output tax of P600,000), the cap is still applicable as that following month, Arpo stresses.

With the output tax of P600,000, 70 percent, or P420,000, would be the amount deductible from P790,000 [the car dealership's remaining available input tax carried over from the previous month].

The remainder, or P370,000, will now have to be carried over to the next month, with four more units still left unsold. In the end, assuming the dealer was able to sell the remaining four units [with P600,000 total output tax, the P370,000 will be deducted from it. The dealer will be paying P230,000 in taxes.

For the assembler, Arpo advises maximizers of the automotive business to be in constant dialogue with each other so they would be able to provide solutions to their industry, and come up with ways to increase the demand for cars.

How this affects car buyers remains to be seen, as it would depend on the decision of the carmakers and car dealers, hope says.

The Vios defends a title

WHEN THE TOYOTA VIOS WON the Best Subcompact Car award in the Car of the Year Philippines (Coty-P) last year, it beamed how other cars in the 1.3-1.5 liter segment. This year, the Vios will defend its title against a wider array of six competitors in the subcompact class: the Chevrolet Aveo, Honda City, Honda Jazz, Hyundai Getz, Hyundai Accent and Kia Pregio.

The Vios appears ready for the challenge, having been overhauled last November with some exterior and interior changes for the 2006 model year. Its' starters, a new front grille with more chrome trim, new headlamps, seen round, big lamps and a new front bumper with air intakes reflect the Vios' facade.

15-inch wheels

Nine-seven-spoke 185/60R 15-inch wheels not only enhance the 1.5-liter Vios' sporty look, but ensure improved ride—also improve its cornering ability. The 1.3 Vios' wheels have been upgraded, too, with eight-spoke 14-inch alloys.

Visiting the '06 Vios from the side, you will immediately notice new chrome strips on the doors' side moldings and new side turn signal lampson the front fenders. The exterior revisions are complemented by a Euro-style pale mirrors on the roof above the rear wind. shield and new rear combination lamps with a 3D reflex reflector that improves the car's visibility to those driving behind it.

Inside the cabin, the major changes addition are a new seat fabric material with an accent motif, a height adjuster for the driver's seat, a convenience console box lid, a trolley or storage tray under the front passenger seat and a pair of cupholders for front seat passengers.

Upgraded

The audio system in the 1.5 Vios has been upgraded to a Pioneer Tuner Stereo single in-dash CD player with MP3 tuner and four speakers. We checked it out and found the sounds as good as those in more expensive cars.

The other details of the commissioned digital instrument cluster display has been changed to make the gauges easier to read. No other tin, except the Toyota Echo variant sold in New England in 2003, has the instrument cluster smack dab in the middle of the dash. A strange location for the gauges, but after some time you get used to it.

More important than the cosmetic changes is the addition of a driver's side airbag and ABS with electronic brakedrive distribution to the 1.5 Vios, safety features that it lacked when it was launched in 2003. Also new are the keyless entry system and illuminated entry system for both the 1.3 and 1.5 variants. The Global Outcome Assessment (GOA) body side-impact beams, head-impact protection, whiplash injury-lessening seats and front and rear 2-point ELR seatbelts remain as standard equipment.

Winning formula

Fortunately, Toyota decided to keep the winning formula that has made the Vios the undisputed market leader since its intro three years ago. The drive train and suspension system have been retained, in case you choose either a 1.5-liter engine producing 107 hp@5,600 rpm and 142 Newton-meters of torque at 4200, or a 1.3 liter capable of 85 hp@5,000 rpm and 120 Nm of torque. Whichever you choose, you get Toyota's Sonar of Variable Valve Timing-intelligent (VVTi) technology.

The Vios' sporty handling and excellent ride quality are attributed to the stabilizer bars in the suspension front and rear with MacPherson strut coil type front and E3A beam axles rear. The 1.3-liter Vios is offered with either a smooth-shifting 4-speed automatic or a 5-speed manual transmission while the 1.5 variant has only the latter.

Size

After driving a 2006 automatic transmission Vios 1.5G CSP (P738,000) for two weeks over the holidays, I am convinced that aside from its engine and fuel-efficiency, it has the right size and comfy ride, what makes the Vios a winner is its size. Just like a perfect fit, the Vios is neither too small nor too big. When I parked it beside a Corolla Altis, I noticed that the Vios was only a tad lower in height. In a country where hardly any driver gives way to another just the right size of car is an advantage.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: MSN— MenSuxx

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* * *

E-mail comments to noach.salazar@inquirer.com.ph.

THE 2006 Toyota Vios 1.5G

ON THE ROAD

Alda Serafin-Mendoza

Tires and wheels designed to make heads turn

By Charles E. Bolton

"IF IT'S ETHOS, IT DOESN'T rock," or so goes the prevailing attitude among some of today's auto enthusiasts who want more from the standard setup the manufacturer supplied on their vehicles.

"For these people, there are a number of options on how they will go about it. Probably one of the most straightforward ways is to upgrade the rims as well as wheels," suggested Sammy Limon, president of Wheel Gallery.

He added that rims and wheels are the first upgrades most auto enthusiasts make when upgrading or customizing their vehicles.

In fact, Limon recently announced the arrival of several high-performance tire models from Nitto as well as premium luxury wheels from Tweny Inches Strong.

6 new models

"From the Nitto brand, we now have six new models: the NT 685, NT 555, NT 555, Neo Gen, Dura Grappler and the 280sl Dragger. Each model serves a different and unique purpose, as we suggest our buyers to shop for our versatile offers [\$10 Sampaguita Ave. cor. Aurora Blvd., Cubao] so they can come to us and discuss their requirements," he said.

The NT 685 are ultra high performance tires mostly from Nitto designed specifically for today's full-size package and SUVs.

It features an aggressive 60+1 (road and noise) tread, double S tread pattern, computerized's combination of diamond grooves and lateral sipes that provide efficient water drainage to ensure superior road handling on wet or dry, pavement conditions.

The Nitto 6200, on the other hand, sports one of the most original and aggressive H/T tread patterns.

"The unique tread design is a perfect complement to your wheels as many H/T tires are directional, meaning they cannot be rotated from side to side and only front to back. The Nitto 6200 unidirectional tread design gives you the freedom to rotate the tires front, back and side to side," Limon explained.

Specially formulated

The NT 555 was developed for creating the ultimate street performance tire. "With it, specially formulated compound and one of the biggest contact patches available, the NT 555 provides superior traction and reliable handling. It also delivers total vehicle control," Limon revealed.

Another new Nitto tire model is the Neo Gen that features its new Nanotechnology. "Nanotechnology molecules are much smaller than conventional ones. This results in a tire's tread that help push water away from the center of the tire for improved wet traction. Also, are optimized to deliver a smoother ride as compared to conventional tires.

All-terrain tires

The Dura Grappler is available in 29-inch sizes in an all-terrain tire designed for light trucks and SUVs. This extreme performance tire encompasses off-pavement traction with on-road stability, creating superior on-pavement ride and handling.

The most extreme tire model

THE NT 555 delivers street performance ride.

TWENTY-INCHES Strong wheels already to look at

in the Nitto lineup is Mud Grappler, available in 16 inch rims, which is designed for extreme off-pavement needs as it features monolithic 13 mm sidelugs, which provide excellent traction and puncture resistance along with outstanding rock crushing and mud traction.

Latest offering

One of the latest offerings from Wheel Gallery is the luxurious-made Tweny Inches Strong (TSG) brand, considered the forward or future of wheels.

Available in the 22-inch series, the TSG is only offered in sizes no less than 20 inches, hence the name.

The TSG wheels are constructed using an exclusive hypereutectic low-pressure casting process, called Flat Lip Technology wherein the rear wall is deep inside the wheel, creating a compact and aggressive look. Its profile for a wide wheel look without the wheel well, even on passenger cars.

The TSG is also the only wheel to feature a unique numbered logo system which, according to Limon, adds to its uniqueness.

Mitsubishi's pride, Ping DJ and Isuzu's SEE technology

ASIAN HERO HAS PROVED once more that he is really this. Asianick's Mr. Troubleshooter, Mel Dizon, and first Ayalanguite should be truly proud of him.

My car got totalled in Bacolod's basement parking a few days back and who did I call?

Arlan Reyes.

Like the wind, Arlan Reyes came running to the dead of night. In a tshirt, he had my car fixed.

The driver of my friend who saw everything wondered out aloud and said in Hiligaynon, "Who is he, Sir?"

I told him Arlan is a respected executive of Mitsubishi.

"Oh, I thought he was simply a mechanic," he said.

From hereon, I will also call Arlan Reyes "Ultimate" since he saved our from sure disaster that night.

May your tribe increase, Arlan.

* * *

If it's true that a comfort room at the food exit near Sta. Ana of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) isn't that comfortable as a locker-suites inside a nightclub, I'm sure Ping de Jesus has already addressed it. I know Ping to be an action man; he will not stomach consumer-unfriendly acts.

A friend of mine has also complained about trucks purposely damaging the world-class superstructure due to overloading. He suggests that weighs be set near truck-entries. If the NLEX should be telecoms of outside the NLEX de pre-

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

sent, they are located inside the expressway. He has a point there. Prevention is always better than a cure, to paraphrase a saying.

The easy thing will be to the toll operators again. Already, I had drafted my last call to Ping for exacting every effort to pave that badly damaged road right after the NLEX, the one going to Tabaco or Legazpi City. Sa-bihasa ni Sabal, indeed!

* * *

Each time a car buff inquires about how good Isuzu is as a vehicle, I answer hesitant to say that it's one of the best, if not the best. Isuzu is the No. 1 truck brand of the globe. Its good to learn that Ronald Dizon must have learn to mixed when he invented the diesel engine in 1896. Through the years, Isuzu cannot be denied as the king of diesel engines innovations.

The good thing about Isuzu is, it has now virtually killed the twin-turbo intercooler diesel engines. For two decades now, Isuzu who else find the best gasoline-powered engines, some even else, a 350-horsepower diesel color appointment for performance of a 200-hp gasoline unit particularly in terms of acceleration. And that's not to include much-improved fuel efficiency and lower carbon dioxide emissions.

This year, Isuzu is pushing for its new corporate theme: SEE to Believe (Safety, Economy, Environment). This is for "the future of mankind and the earth."

The Alcyon is on the forefront of this technology, whose direct-injection diesel engine has exceeded the automotive standards of economy and environment.

The diesel's 3.0-liter 4JJ1-1 TCQ diesel, is Common Rail Direct Injection (DCRI) engine. Equipped, produces 146 ps of power, representing a 20 percent improvement from a nonturbo, inter-cool unit. Torque is also increased by 30 to 35 percent, whose figures are the results of the new common-rail system's precise fuel injection and enhanced combustion chamber design.

No wonder these value didn't have the patience last year to queue for the base-selling Isuzu-GenFuser. Now switched to the Alcyon.

* * *

SEA GAMES CAR PLATES. Answering to Rodrigo C. Santos, the super efficient project director for the SEA Games countdown-monitor plates, the SEA Games car plates you purchased last year are valid up to Sept. 7, 2006.

* * *

QUOTE ME: Make it a habit to overtake only the slow-moving vehicles, never those traveling at 100 kph.

* * *

Comments to inquirer@philonet.net.

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Business Partner

EPCIB board not yet decided on BDO offer

Management to review merits of merger

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE EQUITABLE PCI BANK'S (EPCIB) board yesterday met to discuss the unsolicited merger proposal from Banco de Oro Universal Bank, pending the results of the review on the offer's merits by the bank's management team.

In an interview yesterday, EPCIBank chairman Florentino Herrera said the offer was not even on the agenda as management was tasked to study the offer and, if necessary, seek help from a financial advisor.

He said the management, led by bank president Rene Santamaria, would likely submit its recommendation by Friday this week.

"I would imagine that they would submit a written on the hiring of a financial advisor," Herrera said, saying however that he himself was not inclined on hiring an advisor.

Bonnaddies and GSIS president Winston Garcia likewise said earlier that they found the merger offer "unattractive."

"If we are interested in a merger, why only BDO? Why not open the doors to other banks," Bonnaddies said, noting that shareholders, including the GSIS and SSS, would get a better value for their shares in EPCIBank by holding out their stakes as one.

BDO has given shareholders until Jan. 31 to assess its offer to merge with EPCIBank through a swap of up to 1.6 of its shares for every 10 CIB shares.

Social Security System president Corazon dela Paz said, meanwhile, that the pension fund was keeping an open mind on the proposal.

dela Paz also said earlier that the pension fund would continue to own a percentage of the offer and would not necessarily have to vote in tandem with the GSIS.

SSS owns 20 percent of EPCIBank, while the GSIS and Bonnaddies' groups own 12 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

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Altis 1.6 G M/T	100,000	10,000	87,000	55,000	40,000	31,000	25,000	21,000
Altis 1.6 E A/T	100,000	10,000	90,000	57,000	41,000	32,000	26,000	22,000
Altis 1.6 G A/T	100,000	10,000	100,000	64,000	47,000	37,000	30,000	25,000
Altis 1.8 E M/T	100,000	10,000	84,000	54,000	39,000	30,000	24,000	20,000
Altis 1.8 G M/T	100,000	10,000	91,000	58,000	42,000	33,000	26,000	22,000
Innova 2.0 J M/T	110,000	10,000	97,000	62,000	45,000	35,000	28,000	24,000
Innova 2.0 G M/T	100,000	10,000	104,000	67,000	48,000	38,000	30,000	26,000
Innova 2.0 G A/T	100,000	10,000	112,000	72,000	52,000	41,000	33,000	28,000
Innova 2.5 D M/T	100,000	10,000	101,000	65,000	47,000	37,000	29,000	25,000
Innova 2.5 G M/T	100,000	10,000	109,000	70,000	51,000	40,000	32,000	27,000
Innova 2.5 J M/T	100,000	10,000	97,000	62,000	45,000	35,000	28,000	24,000
Innova 2.5 G M/T	100,000	10,000	104,000	67,000	48,000	38,000	30,000	26,000

All these wonderful deals, as our way of saying THANK YOU to you, our dear consumers, for making Toyota Motor Philippines, the country's No. 1.

TOYOTA moving forward

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2006 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

A different kind of Chinovela

By Jamie Alcaraz

TEN YEARS AFTER "Bridget Jones's Diary" first came off the presses, there's still no stopping chick lit.

In 2005, market research firm Bookstat Information Inc. estimated that these light, breezy stories written by, for and about sparky female yuppies raked in about $137 million in the United States alone.

Local bookstores have devoted entire shelves and displays to the ubiquitous and personality-packed paperbacks. Filipino authors have tried their hands at the genre, too. Since 2003, Summit Books has published no less than 10 chick lit titles, which include "Drama Queen" and "Ten Boyfriend Rules Rich."

Over on the mainland, however, there are some women on the Chinese chick lit forefront who owe more to William Burroughs, Douglas Coupland and Jack Kerouac than to Bette Bao Lord and Amy Tan.

While Jung Chang's "Wild Swans" and

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HP-PSC 1510

Good enough printer for the home office

By Gabriel H. Mercado
Contributor

NOT EVERYTHING HEWLETT Packard may have done has resulted in success. Grouping computers, for example, didn't seem to have created much of an impact for the brand. If anything, HP's computer retooling after that mishap indicated a refocusing of efforts away from business outside of their normal scope and back into their traditional strengths.

And as far as making printers go, HP remains a leader. We've come to know HP via those products anyway.

The all-in-one printer, scanner and copier Hewlett Packard HP-PSC 1510, a small and affordable do-it-all workhorse, is the latest example of this bet.

Choose an all-in-one printer

All-in-one printers can be both a blessing and bane. A blessing because you get the functions of a printer, scanner and copier in one compact machine, and a bane because only one person can use it at a time, which may be limiting for busy offices. Also, if one of the three functions breaks down, you get to lose all functions at the same time since you have to send the machine to the repair shop.

With those primary pros and cons in mind, a buyer needs to then consider the volume of work that needs to be done, as well as standard details like quality and speed of print output by the printer function, quality of scanned documents and paper size handling for the scanner, and print output quality and speed, paper size and scanning speed for the copier.

After those, there are the incidental costs. In the case of the HP PSC 1510, you should consider the costs of the printer ink cartridges. It is also important to consider how much space the printer will take. After that, we unpack on various things, such as how good (or not so, how the picket comes in (Not one case HERE), how it looks, how noisy it is, etc, until finally we get to the cost of the item itself. Whew.

It's a solid, mid-class, all-in-one device good for personal use

HP PSC 1510

Where this one stands

First, the printer function gets the most marks because of its speed, rated at 18ppm for color, and a best (for 2006) 20ppm for mono. There are printers that cost twice as much and are slower.

The quality isn't especially thrilling, but is acceptably enough to fall into the standard "good enough" rubric. Set at photo-quality output, however, the HP PSC 1510, with its ink cartridges, produces pretty good results and, with good-quality shots, can probably produce pages near the of banning.

The flatbed scanner is pretty standard stuff, allowing paper sizes of 8.5 x 11 inches, situated at the top and opening from the front for easy access. There is no automatic document feeder (ADF) option, so folks who plan to scan whole documents on a regular basis may need to look elsewhere.

Both printer and scanner work to maximize for a possible work quality 1200 pixels per inch (PPI) scanner, which, given its limitations, will work for the occasional quick copy, no-heavy stuff. Again, quite acceptable style if you know that's what you need and have studied your requirements beforehand.

Where it stands out

Not everything is standard with the HP-PSC 1510. It comes with Portbridge Paper-transfer, which will automatically make it an option for those with digital cameras who are looking to print their pictures quickly without having to pass them through a computer.

Then you have the price. Several websites estimate the cost of approximately P5,000 to P6,000. Granted that this might vary wildly once you see it in local stores, trust me when I say that's still a pretty good deal for an HP all-in-one.

Finally, you have the brand, and that's where the Digital Exchange at Glorietta 3 Ayala Walk factor in. Being a Hewlett Packard product at the very least should reduce your apprehensions, but once you need to check the product, look no further than the HP store at the Digital Exchange.

In addition to the fact that this is an HP store itself, and not a reseller or dealer, you can get a hands-on and direct feel of the product. In other places, you can only stare at the box or read the brochure.

Overall, the HP PSC 1510 is a solid, and-class, all-in-one device aimed directly at the single user in a small office or at the home-office environment for business or personal use. If you're this demographic, it'd be best to take a trip to Glorietta 3's Digital Exchange and see the printer for yourself.

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We have a winner!

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BIANCA Guerrero of St. Scholastica's College, Manila, has won a Canon Pixma IP3000, thanks to her PowerPoint skills. However, we're sure you want to start giving your new printer a workout, so please call Chino de la Cruz at 8978808 for details on how to claim your prize.

Yes, you can be a winner!

This week, 2bit and Digital Exchange are giving away an HP PSC 1510. If you want to join our contest, tell us why you deserve to win this printer in the most creative way you can. E-mail your entries to contest2bit@inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget your name, school/office and contact info!

A different kind of Chinovela

From page C1

Author Mo's "Wild Ginger" are banned by memories of the Cultural Revolution, history and ideology take a back seat to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll in many popular releases.

Joy luck clubbing

"The Cultural Revolution is out of my dictionary," Khan Hi, 40, the thirty-something ex-Red Guard who now flowers parties for a living, told the San Francisco Gate last year. And it shows. Her first novel, "Candy," set in Southern China's Special Economic Zone in the 1980s when the People's Republic was emancipating itself with free trade, says nothing of socialism. Chinese sanitation barraged "Candy" anyway.

Its protagonist, Hong, is born into a family of intellectuals, but grows disillusioned with school after a friend cracks under the pressure of getting into a top university. Hong is eventually swallowed by a shadowy triangle and turns to drugs to fill her increasingly empty days.

There's an apathy and self-lessness reminiscent of films like Zhang Yang's "Quitting" and Han Hsiao-chen's "Mr. Incomes Months," but neither Hong nor her prostitute-drug-girl frustrated musician friends have any real bond with the government.

Many episode her time organizing raves on the Great Wall of China (in the rain, no less) and visiting her daughter in Beijing. "I have so many cells to divide to do with my life now," she said in the Han Dynasty-esque tone. "Drugs are really boring."

Place of lit

"Candy" was banned in April 2004, the same month the government cracked down on another piece of chick lit, this time by Mian's "shock artist," Wei Hui.

While Mian took up writing as a form of therapy after rehab, Wei majored in literature at Fudan University and had an anthology of short stories ("Shriek of the Butterfly") under her belt prior to her first novel, "Shanghai Baby."

As with Mian's work, it's difficult to distinguish her from fiction in "Shanghai Baby" which reads like a pregnant but thinly veiled memoir. The story revolves around Coco, also a Nubie grad, who quits her anodyne job to enter the great Chinese movie. Coco makes her ambition clear from the very first page: "Every morning when I open my eyes I wonder when I can do to make myself famous."

Wei (the) shows off her penchant for down-to-the-second verbosity in a novel. "This is the city at rush hour. All sorts of vehicles and pedestrians, all their attitudes, desires and emotions secrets, merge with the flow like tryptic plunging through a deep gorge. The sun shines down on the street, hemmed in on both sides by skyscrapers...the mad emotions of humans—converting between city and car. It, the petty details of daily life are like dust suspended in the air. They are a consciousness chains of our material age."

The East is pink

According to its (blindingly pink) book cover, "Beijing Doll" was banned "for its candid exploration of a young girl's sexual awakening." This from native a few months after its publication in 2000, when author Chun Sue was only 19.

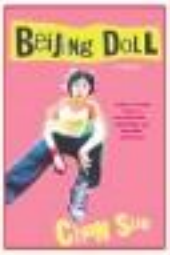
The book is unabashedly autobiographical; reading it is like sneaking a peek at the diary your best friend keeps when she was 15. Chun Sue starts off by listing down the things she thinks the readers ought to know about her: her name, her school, her friends and her favorite mall ("Long Live Parkwest").

Throughout the book, she uses code names and initials to identify her various boyfriends and crushes—B1, L, T, Mini. (How does she now said boyfriends? Brenna Lash in the paper, photo includes lifted off from tapes, you get the drift.)

Abandon all expectations of a plot. Chun Sue just vomits from one boy to another, drops out of school twice and comes to the conclusion that life is awkward. While there are the occasional flashes of insight, this "voice of the new generation" spends most of her time lazed stare) whining.

Dog-eared reads

START off the Year of the Fire Dog with three of the wildest Oriental reads for the global fictionista.



	"Shanghai Baby"	Candy	Beijing Doll
Author	Wei Hui, 32, "China's first banned postmodern literature novelist"	Mian Mian, 34, "junkie child for spiritual pollution"	Chun Sue, who wrote the novel when she was 17 and had it published at 19
Translator	Bruce Humes	Andrea Lingenfelter	Howard Goldblatt
Heroine	An aspiring writer torn between an impotent drug addict and a married literature businessman	A sometime bar singer who can't resist guys and keeps ending up in rehab	A 15-year-old Courtney Love wannabe who drags her mom along when she relocates/lands
On love	"It was to be who taught me that a kiss has a universal secret all its own."	"Love is the fantasy you have smoking your third cigarette."	"A joining of the hearts? What a joke. I could have died laughing."
On life	"Tomorrow, nothing to do but grab my self by the hair and yank myself off the planet."	"One morning as the sun was coming up, I told myself that I had to swallow up all of the fear and garbage around me, and once it was inside me I had to vomit it all out cold."	"There was no discernible difference between the aroused and aroused and the aroused yet to aware."
On sex	"It's awed with a slightly musky flavor, like aniseed and cinnamon dark soup."	"A climax is the climax you've ever had."	"Sounds good."

Free gas!

PUBLISH DOWN THAT IN those hard times, even filling up your gas tank is a burden. Smart Prepaid Sets Unloaded, the gas that promises to give you rebates for your roaring Racers JP Tuazon, Michele Bumgarner, Tyson Sy and the multi-talented Epi Quizon swear by Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Petron wants you to try Xtra Unleaded Gas, which is why it's giving away a gift certificate to a lucky reader. Just answer this question—where will you go and who would you go with if you had a full tank of gas?

E-mail your answer to contest@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, school/office and contact info.

JP TUAZON
"I raced in Baungas regularly and I got 14 km/liter. That would be about 140km on a full tank, even when I drive in reasonably, with all seven headlights online in mileage runs." This car racer says he gets twice the rated from his favorite Petron's Xtra Unleaded.

EPI QUIZON
"If you drive economically and use your gas wisely, you can clear the whole of Luzon, especially if you're using the right gas such as Petron Xtra Unleaded, which has already been experimented and tested to give extra miles on the road. No kidding."

MICHELE BUMGARNER
"Top female racer and traffic headturner Michele would drive from Manila to Tali Beach with a full tank—about a 200-km drive. "I look forward to going there for some peace and quiet time," says this racing queen.

TYSON SY
An 18-year-old international race driver for Formula 3, Boyo says that "(Petron's reward is 1,114 km on a full tank, I can do the same or even better. I could probably beat the record!"

They got lucky!

SHOUT OUT CONGRATULATIONS to Bryan C. Pineda, Joy Jane Galbula, Clinton Cheng, Fe Jo Perez-S. Caveman and Gabby Bulan! You going lucky some a copy of Kristine Nicole Bustamante, Nina Castelle, Design and Lessons. Email heads to Ian Sanchez and Rudi to discuss.

Just bring on information next when you pick them up from the receptionist at the Inquirer office, Chino Roces Avenue cor. Tapian and Mercedes Sts., Makati City. Inquirer subscribers should bring your ID, and a certification letter. Prizes are claimed within 60 days written for Mehl.

Many thanks to the wonderful people of Petron Manila, Philippines, Sony BMG, Universal Records Inc., and EMI Philippines.

Contests, contests and more contests!

We at 2thUP just love giving stuff away. Here are more contests you can join and more prizes you can win

Do you have a Jollibeeduh!

Tell us why you think your hotbuds is a Jollibeeduh in the most creative way you can, and e-mail your entry at contest@mail.inquirer.com.ph. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact info. The funny theme entries will be chosen and the winners will receive a free Jollibeeduh party package P2,000 worth of Jollibee gift certificates.

Win Letterman tickets for your parents or grandparents!

Oh yes, the Lettermen are coming to Manila and 2thUP is giving away tickets for their show at the Araneta Coliseum (Jan. 27 or 28) that you can win for your parents or your grandparents—the choice is up to you. Ten lucky readers will receive two tickets each, while one lucky reader will get two parents seats for his or her loved ones.

Our readers from Cebu can join in on the fun, too. We're giving away four prime seats to the Letterman's Jan. 28 performance in the Queen City of the South. Readers from Davao can also win two prime seats for their Jan. 31 show in the city.

Just tell us what's Letterman song most reminds you of your parents or grandparents and why. E-mail your entries along with your name, age, school/office and contact info at contest2@inquirer.com.ph on or before 12 noon of Jan. 27.

Hong Kong Calling

Just like we said, exercise your creativity and you just might win a trip to Hong Kong for two, thanks to 2thUP and Genting Club.

All you have to do is create a prank you would've for carrying your Genting Club titan (check their out in the superheroine universe you). Heads, ghost, demon, antis—the choice of material and design is totally up to you.

Send your finished pouches to Unit 2704 Grey and Land Mega Plaza ADB Ave. cor. Ortigas Rd. Ortigas Ave. Pasig City. Include your name, age, school/office and contact info. Three consolation prizes of P5,000 will also be given away. Deadline for this promo has been extended to Jan. 31.

Bottle battle

Many readers have already started sending in their artwork up Lady's Choice jars in the hopes of winning our contest. Because we know some of you want to join, we are extending the deadline for another week.

Bring out your inner Lady's Choice jars, decorate them up. Do as imaginative as you need, transform them into beautiful décor items and send your entries to 2thUP Inter N Svenska Bldg. Annex, 400 N. Mabini City. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact info.

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